MEMOIRS OF THE
ARCHÆOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

No. 30

The Beginnings of Art in Eastern India with special reference to Sculptures in the Indian Museum, Calcutta

BY
RAMAPRASAD CHANDA, B.A., F.A.S.B., RAI BAHADUR,
Superintendent, Archaeological Section, Indian Museum, Calcutta.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Anderson.—Anderson, *Catalogue and Handbook of the Archæological Collections in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, 1883.*

A. R. A. S. I., E. C.—*Annual Report of the Archæological Survey of India, Eastern Circle.*

A. S. I., A. R.—*Archæological Survey of India, Annual Report.* Part II.

Carroti.—*A History of Art,* by Dr. G. Carroti, Vol. I., *Ancient Art.* Revised by Mrs. Arthur Strong. London, 1908.

C. H. I.—*Cambridge History of India.* Vol. I. *Ancient India.* Cambridge, 1922.

C. R.—Cunningham, *Report of the Archæological Survey of India.*

Dalton.—O. M. Dalton, *The Treasure of the Oxus with other Examples of Early Oriental Metal-work.* London, 1927.

Dialogues 1, 2 and 3.—*Dialogues of the Buddha.* Translated by F. W.& A. C. Rhys Davids. Parts 1 (1899), 2 (1910), 3 (1921).

Divyavadana.—*The Divyāvadāna.* Edited by Cowell and Neil. Cambridge, 1886.

Ep. Ind.—*Epigraphia Indica.*

H. F. A. I. C.—V. A. Smith, *A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon.* Oxford, 1911.

Hultzsch.—E. Hultzsch, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.* Vol. I. *Inscriptions of Asoka.* New Edition, 1925.

Ind. Ant.—*The Indian Antiquary.*

J. A. S. B.—*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.* Part I.

Jastrow.—*The Civilization of Babylonia and Assyria,* by Maurice Jastrow. Second Edition.

J. B. O. R. S.—*Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society.*

J. R. A. S.—*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.*

King.—King and Thomson, *The Sculptures and Inscriptions of Behistun.* London, 1907.

M. A. S. I.—*Memoirs of the Archæological Survey of India.*

Per. and Chip.—*History of Art in Persia,* from the French of Georges Perrot and Charles Chipiez. London, 1892.

Sarre.—*Die Kunst Des Alten Persien,* by Friedrich Sarre. Berlin, 1923.

Sutta-Nipata.—*The Sacred Books of the East.* Vol. X, Part II. Second Edition, 1898.

Tolman.—Tolman, *Ancient Persian Lexicon and Texts.* The Vanderbilt Oriental Series, Vol. VI. New York, 1908.

Waddell.—L. A. Waddell, *Report on the Excavations at Pataliputra (Patna).* Calcutta, 1903.

THE BEGINNINGS OF ART IN EASTERN INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SCULPTURES IN THE INDIAN MUSEUM, CALCUTTA

I. ART AND VEDIC RELIGION

THE history of Indian Art before the reign of the Maurya Emperor Aśoka is shrouded by a thick veil of darkness. The excavations at Harappa in the Punjab and at Mohen-jo-Daro in Sind are lifting this veil in one province of India and revealing the remains of a great civilisation that flourished in the Indus valley in the third millenium before Christ. But the valley of the Ganges, particularly the Brahmanic Madhyadeśa extending from the Karnal District to Allahabad, the cradle-land of Brahmanic civilisation, has as yet yielded no monumental documents that may be assigned to the pre-Mauryan period. This is not to be wondered at. Monumental art came into being as a handmaid of religion. The early Brahmanic or Vedic religion that promoted sciences like Astronomy and Geometry[1] was not favourable to the growth of art, for it enjoined the worship of gods not through images installed in temples, but through sacred fires installed in simple sheds. Yāska's Nirukta, a work assigned to about 500 B. C. by modern scholars, contains the following very interesting discussion about the form of the Vedic gods (7, 6-7) :—

"Now (follows) discussion of the form of the gods (*ākāra-chintanaṁ devatānām*). Some say they resemble human beings in form (*purushavidhāḥ*); for their panegyrics and their appellations are like those of sentient beings; and their human limbs are referred to in the hymns......They are also (associated in their hymns of praise) with objects with which men are usually associated........Moreover they are associated with the sort of actions with which men are usually associated.

"Others say (the gods) do not resemble human beings in form (*apurushavidhāḥ*), because those gods that are (actually) seen do not resemble human beings in form; as for instance, Agni (fire-god), Vāyu (wind-god), Āditya (sun god), Pṛithivī (earth goddess), Chandramas (moon god), etc. As to the view that panegyrics of the gods are like those of sentient beings, (they reply) that inanimate objects, beginning from dice and ending with

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[1] G. Thibaut, "On the Sulvasūtra," J. A. S. B., Vol. XLIV (1875), Part I, p. 227 ff.

herbs are likewise praised. As to the view that the human limbs of the gods are referred to in the hymns, (they reply) that this (treatment) is accorded to inanimate objects........As to the view (that in their hymns of praise the gods are associated) with objects with which men are associated, (they reply) that it is just the same (in the case of inanimate objects)....

"Or the gods may both resemble human beings in form as well as may not resemble human beings in form.

"Or the gods who do not resemble human beings in form exist in the form of *karman* (sacrifice); as for instance, the sacrifice performed by the Yajamāna (sacrificer). This is the opinion of those who know the legends."[1]

This discussion clearly shows that up to the time of Yāska which synchronises with the last phase of the Vedic period, the Vedic gods had not been invested with the forms in which they appear in the Epics and the Purāṇas. The meaning of the concluding portion embodying Yāska's own view is obscure. Durga, the scholiast, interprets it in accordance with the epic legends. Satyavrata Sāmaśramī, the editor of the Nirukta with Durga's commentary, is of opinion that in the concluding passage Yāska gives expression to the opinion of the exponents of the Mīmāṁsā system who hold that sacrifice itself rewards the performer of the sacrifice without the intervention of the gods to whom the sacrifice is ostensibly offered. So as givers of reward of the sacrifice the gods are identical with the sacrifice.[2]

Besides the ordinary Agnyādheya and Punarādheya ceremonies (the installation and the re-installation of the sacrificial fires), the ritual books prescribe an independent ceremony called Agnichayana, building of the fire altar. In the foundation of the altar the following objects are deposited according to the Taittirīya Saṁhitā (5, 2, 6-9);—a lotus leaf, a gold disk, a golden, man (*hiraṇmaya purusha*), two wooden ladles, a perforated brick, a brick of Dūrva grass, a living tortoise, the heads of dead animals including those of a horse and a bull, a mortar, a pan in the middle of which the head of the man is put and the head of a snake.[3] In such a company the golden man probably represents the human victim originally immolated and buried at the foundation of a sacred edifice. In the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (7, 4, 1, 15) the golden man is identified in turn with Prajāpati, Agni and the sacrificer. "It is a man (*purusha*), for Prajāpati is the man." The figure of the golden man was a very crude one. We are told in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (7, 4, 1, 45), "As to this they say, 'Let him make no arms to this golden man, lest he should cause him to be redundant; for these two spoons are (in lieu of) his arms.' Let him nevertheless make (him with arms)."[4]

Not only was there no room for images of gods in the Vedic form of worship (*yajña*), the religious architecture of the Vedic period afforded no scope

[1] Lakshman Sarup, *The Nighaṇṭu and the Nirukta*, English Translation and Notes, Oxford. 1921. pp. 116-117. The translation given in the text, though mainly based on Dr. Sarup's translation, does not always closely follow it.

[2] *The Nirukta with Commentaries*, Bib. Ind., Vol. III, p. 342 note.

[3] Keith, *The Veda of the Black Yajus*, Harvard Oriental Series, Vol. 19, pp. 409-414.

[4] Eggeling, *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XLI, p. 326.

for the development of the decorator's art. The building connected with the Vedic religion, the sacrificial hall or fire chapel, was a simple shed of the primitive type. It is called *prāchīnavaṁśa* or *prāgvaṁśa*, because the top beams extended from west to east.[1] The use of the word *vaṁśa* indicates that the material used was bamboo. In the eastern half of this shed were installed the three sacrificial fires; the western half was occupied by the sacrificer and the priests, and the materials for sacrifice were also deposited therein. According to Satyāshāḍha-Hiraṇyakeśin (Śrautasūtra 3, 2, and 7, 1) the Śālā and Vimata, the names by which the fire chapel is designated, are not synonymous; the top beams of the former extended from south to north (*udīchīnavaṁśa*), and of the latter from west to east (*prāchīnavaṁśa*). The same type of sheds did the duty of fire chapels in great sacrifices like Rājasūya and Aśvamedha in which royalty was concerned. Baudhāyana prescribes the building of six sheds for Rājasūya (26, 1), and the building of both a *prāchīnavaṁśa* shed (*śālā*) and a *vimata* for Aśvamedha (15, 1-2). But in the Śrauta-sūtra of Śāṅkhyāyana (16, 18, 13-17) is prescribed a curious rite supplementary to the horse sacrifice in connection with which temples (*prāsāda*) are mentioned for the first time. I shall translate the text in accordance with the commentary of Varadattasuta Ānartīya[2]:—

"During the horse sacrifice, on the middle day, temples (*prāsāda*) should be erected on all sides of the Āhavanīya fire. The roof of the temples should be surrounded by walls with windows. The priests (getting up on the temples) offer all kinds of grains (to the Āhavanīya fire through the windows) in the night. They get down at the time of the morning *anuvāka*. Assistants (*parikarmiṇaḥ*) then get up (on the temples) and offer oblations from sunrise."

The temples referred to here were probably structures of brick. Cities had grown up in the Vedic Madhyadeśa in the later Vedic period. Kāmpila, evidently identical with Kāmpilya, the capital of Pāñchāla, is named in the Saṁhitās of the Yajurveda.[3] The patronymic Kauśāmbeya occurring in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (12, 2, 2, 13) means a 'native of the town Kauśāmbī' according to the commentator Harisvāmin. So brick buildings for residential purposes were probably common in the later Vedic period. Some innovators might have erected brick halls in connection with the royal horse sacrifice, and it is evidently this innovation that is noted in the Śāṅkhāyana Śrautasūtra. But this exception only proves the rule that sacrifices were performed in simple sheds.

II. ART AND THE PRIMITIVE RELIGION OF EASTERN INDIA

The ancient Buddhist and Jaina texts and the early Buddhist monuments reveal the existence of a primitive religion in Eastern India, particularly in Videha (Tirhut), Magadha (south Bihar) and Aṅga (south-eastern Bihar), that

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[1] *Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra*, 6, 1; *Satyāshāḍha Śrautasūtra*, 7, 1.

[2] *Śāṅkhyāyana Srautasūtra*, edited by A. Hillebrandt (Bib. Ind.), Vol. I, p. 210; III, p. 382.

[3] Macdonell & Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol. I.

was more favourable to the development of plastic art than the Vedic religion. The most important feature of this religion was the worship of the Chaityas. In a short dialogue of the *Aṅguttara-Nikāya* Buddha explains to the Lichchhavī-Vajjis of Vaiśālī the seven conditions of their welfare. Two of these that relate to religion are:—

1. "So long as the Lichchhavī-Vajjis honour and esteem and revere and support the Vajjian chetiyas (Chaityas) in the city or outside it, and allow not proper offerings and rites as formerly given and performed to fall into desuetude, so long may the Lichchhavī-Vajjis be expected not to decline but to prosper.

2. "So long as the rightful protection, defence and support shall be fully provided for the Arahants among them, so that Arahants from a distance may enter the realm and the Arahants therein may live at ease, so long may, etc."[1]

In the Mahāparinibbāna-Suttanta Buddha repeats the same seven conditions of welfare of the Lichchhavis when speaking to the minister of the king Ajātaśatru of Magadha.[2] According to the same Suttanta there were six Chaityas at Vaiśālī, *viz.*, Udena, Gotamaka, Sattambaka (chaitya of the seven mangoes), Bahuputta (chaitya of the many sons), Sārandada and Chāpāla.[3] In the Pātika Suttanta of the Dīgha Nikāya (No. 24) it is said that the Udena chaitya was situated on the east, the Gotamaka chaitya on the south, the Sattamba on the west and the Bahuputta on the north of Vaiśālī.[4] In the Sanskrit list the six Chaityas of Vaiśālī are thus named,—Chāpāla, Saptāmraka, Bahuputraka, Gautama-nyagrodha, Śālavana where the fore-part of the cart was thrown (*dhurānikshepanam*), and the Makuṭabandhana (the tying of the diadem) chaitya of the Mallas.[5] The last-named chaitya is wrongly placed near Vaiśālī by the author of the Divyāvadāna, for in the Mahāparinibbānā Suttanta, the chaitya of the Mallas called Makuṭabandhana (*Makuṭabandhanaṁ nāma Mallānāṁ chetiyam*) is placed to the east of Kuśinārā (Kuśīnagara).[6] Chāpāla, Saptāmraka, Bahuputraka and Gautamaka are names common to both the lists. Gautama-nyagrodha, the Sanskrit equivalent of the Gotamaka chetiya, clearly indicates that it was a Nyagrodha tree (*ficus indica*). In place of Udena and Sārandada of the Pali list we have Śālavana and Makuṭabandhana in Sanskrit. The Gautama-nyagrodha and some other names make it clear that these Chaityas were either holy trees or holy groves of trees (Sālavana, Saptāmraka). Some Pali texts refer to another Bahuputra chaitya lying between Rajagriha and Nalanda. In the commentary on the Theragāthā this Chaitya is called Bahuputraka banyan, that is to say, it was a holy banyan tree (*ficus religiosa*).[7] The Jain Aupapātika Sūtra gives the stereotyped Jain account[8]

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[1] *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (Pali Text Society), Part IV, London, 1899, pp. 16-17; see also the next (XX) sutta.

[2] *Dialogues*, 2, p. 80.

[3] *Dialogues*, 2, p. 110.

[4] *Dialogues* 3, p. 14.

[5] *Divyāvadana*, p. 201.

[6] *Dialogues*, 2, p. 181.

[7] Mrs. Rhys Davids. *Psalms of the Brethren* (P. T. S.), p. 361.

[8] *Aupapātika Sūtra*, edited by Dr. Ernest Leumann, Leipzig, 1883, pp. 22-24.

of a Chaitya in connection with the Pūrṇabhadra Chaitya near Champā, the capital of Aṅga (south-eastern Bihar), from which a few extracts are given below :—

"Outside this city of Champā, to the north-east thereof, was a sanctuary named Pūrṇabhadra. It was of ancient origin, told by men of former days, old, renowned, rich and well known.....It had daises built in it, and was reverentially adorned with a coating of dry cowdung and bore figures of the five fingered hand painted in gośirsha sandal, fresh red sandal, Dardara sandal. There was in it great store of ritual pitchers. On its doorways were ritual jars and well fashioned arches......This sanctuary Pūrṇabhadra was encompassed round about by a great wood......In this wood was a broad mid-space. Therein, it is related, was a great and fine Aśoka-tree......Underneath this fine Aśoka-tree, somewhat close to its trunk, was, it is related, a large dais of earthen blocks. It was of goodly proportions as to breadth, length and height.....It was smooth and massive, eight-cornered like the face of a mirror, narrow, very delightful and variously figured with wolves, bulls, horses, men, dolphins, birds, snakes, elves, ruru-deer, śarabha-deer, yak-oxen, elephants, forest-creepers and padmaka creepers."[1]

In a stanza uttered by Buddha in the Divyāvadāna (p. 164) Chaitya tree is distinctly mentioned. It runs, "Men without fear take refuge in mountains, forests, gardens and Chaitya trees; such refuge is not good, such refuge is not the best; by taking such refuge (one does) not escape from all miseries."

The stūpa of Bharhut in the Nagod State in Baghelkhand was a Buddhist edifice erected not later than the middle of the second century B. C. It was evidently intended to enshrine the relics of Buddha. Round this stūpa was a stone railing consisting of pillars, cross-bars and copings richly decorated with bas-reliefs. Nearly half the number of these stones are now displayed in the Indian Museum. Most of the bas-reliefs carved on these stones illustrate legends connected with the Buddha's last birth as Gautama and his previous births or jātakas and show Buddhist objects of worship like Bodhi Trees and Stūpas. But some of the bas-reliefs illustrate primitive tree worship that survived down to the second century B. C. Plate I*a* represents a bas-relief on a coping stone, C. 29. It shows a holy tree with an altar underneath surrounded by lions and antelopes assembled in a friendly spirit. Above the relief is engraved in old Brāhmī characters :—

Migasamadaka chet⌊i⌋ya

"The chaitya that gladdens the heart of the wild animals."

Another bas-relief on a coping, C. 50, shows a tree with altar to which three elephants are evidently offering worship (Plate I*b*). Above is the following old Brāhmī inscription :—

Abode chatiyam

"The chaitya on the Arbuda (Mount Abu)."

Another bas-relief on a coping, C. 56, though not so named, undoubtedly

[1] English Translation by L. D. Barnett, *The Antagaḍa-Dasāo and Aṇuttarovavāiya-Dasāo*, London, 1907, pp. 2-7.

represents a Chaitya tree (Plate I*c*). The inscription on it reads :—

jabū Naḍode pavate

"The Jambu tree on mount Naḍoda."

Mount Naḍoda is evidently the Naro range about 6 miles to the north of Bharhut. This bas-relief shows a tree out of which come out two human hands, the one holding a bowl and the other pouring water with a pitcher on the hands of a man seated on a basket. In the outstretched hands we have to recognise a tree spirit or Devatā. The story of a tree Devatā who supplied food and drink to travellers is thus told in the Dhammapada Commentary (2, 1, 6) :—

"On a later occasion, as the ascetics were on their way back from the Himalaya country (to Kosambi), they saw a certain great banyan-tree in a forest retreat and went and sat down at the foot of it. The oldest ascetic thought to himself, 'The deity who resides in the tree cannot be mundane. There must be a deva-king of great power here. How good it would be if he would give this band of ascetics water to drink.' Immediately the tree spirit gave them water to drink. The ascetic thought of water to bathe in, and the spirit gave water for the purpose. He thought of food, and the spirit gave food. Then this thought occurred to the ascetic, 'This deva-king gives us every single thing we think of. I wish we might see him.' Immediately the spirit burst the trunk of the tree and showed himself."[1]

A very similar bas-relief on a pillar of the old railing of Bodh Gaya is described by Cunningham (Mahābodhi, p. 13, Plate VIII, 11). In a panel of a corner pillar of the railing of Bharhut, P. 12 (29), is carved a bas-relief which shows a holy tree with an altar underneath (Plate I*d*). Six elephants are offering worship to the tree. On the altar is engraved :—

1. *Bahuhathiko nigodho*
2. *Naḍode*

"The banyan tree Bahuhastika on (Mount) Naḍoda."

The name *Bahuhathiko* (Bahuhastika) is engraved also on a pillar of the rail below. The banyan tree represented here is evidently a *chaitya* tree and the name Bahuhastika denotes that it was known to be a special object of worship of the elephants. On one of the fragments of the Bharhut railing (not in the Indian Museum) Cunningham found inscribed :—

(1) [*B*]*ahuhathika āsana*

(2) [*bhag*]*avato Mahadevasa*

"The seat of the Lord Mahādeva under the Bahuhastika."[2]

If this Bahuhathika also is the same as the Bahuhathika banyan tree of our bas-relief, the latter also must have been held sacred as the haunt of a spirit named Mahādeva. In another Bharhut inscription Mahādeva is said to have rescued Vasugupta from the belly of a sea-monster.[3] This Mahādeva is not the Brahmanic Mahādeva or Śiva, for Śiva is not connected with the banyan tree in the Brahmanic mythology, but must be a tree spirit.

[1] E. W. Burlingame, *Buddhist Legends translated from the original Pali Text of the Dhammapada Commentary* (Harvard Oriental Series, Vols. 28-29), Cambridge, Mass., 1921, Part I, pp. 277-278.

[2] Lüders, *List of Brāhmī Inscriptions* (Ep. Ind., Vol. X, Appendix), No. 907.

[3] Lüders, *List* No. 881.

The Bodhi tree is a direct descendant of the Chaitya tree of the type Bahuhathika underneath which lay the seat of a tree spirit. In the Bhaya-Bherava-Sutta of the Majjhimanikāya Buddha says that before his full Enlightenment he took shelter in the wilds (near Uruvela according to the other sources) and visited *ārāmacetiyāni* (the Chaityas in the parks), *vanacetiyāni* (the Chaityas in the forest) and *rukkhacetiyāni* (ordinary Chaitya trees) in order to discover fear and dread.[1] The class of spirits or superhuman beings with which the Chaityas are usually connected are the Yakshas. According to Buddhaghosha, the famous author of commentaries on several Pali texts, a Chaitya is a Yaksha-chaitya or the abode of a Yaksha. In the Saṁyutta Nikāya I, 10, 4 the Maṇimāla chaitya in Magadha is said to be the haunt of the Yaksha Maṇibhadra,[2] and the Sūrya Prajñapti, an ancient Jaina text, tells us that a Maṇibhadra chaitya stood to the north-east of the city named Mithilā, the ancient capital of Tirhut. In the Vedic literature the term Yaksha does not occur as the name of a class of superhuman beings[3] and Kuvera Vaiśravaṇa (the king of the Yakshas according to the Buddhist and post-Vedic Brahmanic literature) is the king of the Rakshas.[4] In the Pali Buddhist texts not only is a class of superhuman beings called Yakshas, the term is also used generically for a divine being and also applied to such gods as Indra, Vishṇu, Prajāpati and to Buddha himself. Chaitya is not mentioned in any of the Vedic texts with the exception of the Āśvalāyana-gṛihya-sūtra (1, 12) wherein a curious sacrifice offered to a Chaitya lying at a distance from the home of the sacrificer is prescribed.[5] It may therefore be inferred that the cult of the Chaitya tree haunted by the Yaksha originated in Eastern India outside the boundary of the home of the orthodox Vedic religion which originally extended to the east as far as the meridian of Allahabad. A railing enclosure with a doorway or doorways was wanted for the protection of the Chaitya tree. On ancient Indian coins known as the punch-marked coins a most familiar symbol is a tree within a railing enclosure. The posts, cross-bars and copings of the railing enclosure when made of wood afforded space for the decorator's skill and gave birth to wood carving which was the precursor of engraving on stone.

Another element of the primitive religion of Eastern India, the cult of the stūpa, also proved helpful to the development of art. A stūpa is a solid mound or tumulus over a deposit of bodily remains. A very interesting dialogue between the dying Buddha and Ānanda in the Mahāparinibbāna Suttanta affords a glimpse of the beginning of the cult of the stūpa.[6] Ānanda asks, "What are we to do, lord, with the remains of the Tathāgata ?" Buddha replies :—

"Hinder not yourselves, Ananda, by honouring the remains of the Tathāgata. Be zealous, I beseech you Ananda, in your own behalf ! Devote yourselves to your own

[1] Lord Chalmers, *Further Dialogues of the Buddha*, Vol. I, London, 1926, p. 13.
[2] Mrs. Rhys Davids, *The Book of the Kindred Sayings*, Part I, London, p. 266.
[3] Keith, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*. Cambridge, Mass, 1925, p. 242.
[4] *Śatapatha Brāhmana*, 13, 4, 3, 10 ; *Śāṅkhāyana Śrautasūtra*, 16, 2, 16-17 ; *Āśvalāyana Śrautasūtra*, 10, 7, 6.
[5] H. Oldenberg, *Grihya-Sūtras*, Part I (Sacred Books of the East, Vol. XXIX), p. 17.
[6] *Dialogues*, 2, pp. 154-157.

good! Be earnest, be zealous, be intent on your good! There are wise men, Ananda, among the nobles, among the Brahmans, among the heads of houses, who are firm believers in the Tathāgata; and they will do honour to the remains of the Tathāgata."

Here Buddha is made to declare unequivocally that for a follower of the Eightfold Path and the seeker of Nirvāṇa the worship of the bodily remains of the Tathāgata would prove a hindrance rather than an aid. Such worship was the business of laymen who sought not Nirvāṇa but happiness in this world and in the next. When Ānanda still insisted on knowing how the remains of the Tathāgata were to be disposed of, Buddha replied that the remains of the Tathāgata should be treated in the same manner as the remains of a king of kings, and thus described the rite :—

"They wrap the body of a king of kings (Rājā Chakkavattī) Ananda, in a new cloth. When that is done they wrap it in carded cotton wool. When that is done they wrap it in a new cloth, and so on till they have wrapped the body in five hundred successive layers of both kinds. Then they place the body in an oil vessel of iron. They then build a funeral pyre of all kinds of perfume, and burn the body of the king of kings. And then at the four cross roads they erect a *thupa* (stūpa) to the king of kings. This, Ananda, is the way in which they treat the remains of a king of kings."

Buddha added that the men worthy of stūpa (*thuparaha-stūpārha*) were four in number, *viz.* "A Tathāgata, an able Awakened One, is worthy of a stūpa (*thuparaha-stūpārha*), one awakened for himself alone (Pratyekabuddha) is worthy of a stūpa; a true hearer of the Tathāgata (*Tathāgata-sāvaka*) is worthy of a stūpa; a king of kings (rājā Chakkavattī) is worthy of a stūpa." The fruit of worshipping a stūpa is thus defined by Buddha :—

"At the thought, Ananda :—This is the stūpa of the Exalted One, an Able Awakened One, worthy of stūpa, the hearts of many shall be made calm and happy; and since they there had calmed and satisfied their hearts they will be reborn after death, when the body was dissolved, in the happy realms of heaven. It is on account of this circumstance, Ananda, that a Tathāgata, an Able Awakened One, is worthy of a stūpa."

Like the sacred tree, the stūpa also required a railing enclosure for its protection which stimulated the decorative instinct of the worshippers. A third element of the primitive religion that favoured the development of art, the animal standard, will be dealt with later on.

III. PATALIPUTRA AND PERSEPOLIS

Now the question is, if the ancient religion of Eastern India was so favourable to the growth of plastic art, why is it that the earliest remains of sculpture date from so late an epoch as the reign of Aśoka (B. C. 268-232). The obvious well known answer is, that the artists of the pre-Aśokan period worked with perishable material, wood, and it was Aśoka who introduced the use of stone on a large scale for building purposes in imitation of the Achæmenian monuments of Persepolis with the help of foreign artists. As this theory has often been challenged by Indian archæologists since the days of Rajendra Lal Mitra,[1] it demands careful reconsideration here. The Greek

[1] Rajendra Lal Mitra, *Antiquities of Orissa*, Vol. I, Calcutta 1875, pp. 14-18.

accounts and the remains of the Maurya city of Pataliputra brought to light by excavations afford valuable materials for testing this theory.

Arrian, evidently following Megasthenes ambassador from Seleucus Nicator to the court of Chandragupta Maurya (B.C. 320-296), writes about the Indian towns, "All their towns which are down beside the rivers or the sea are made of wood; for towns built of brick (*i.e.*, sun-dried mud bricks) would never hold out for any length of time with the rains on the one hand, and, on the other, the rivers which rise above their banks and spread a sheet of water over the plains. But the towns which are built on elevated places out of reach, these are made of brick and clay.[1]" The old city of Rājagṛiha with its walls and remains of dwellings built of rough cyclopean masonry belongs to the latter category, and the city of Pataliputra to the former. Strabo, following Megasthenes, writes of Pataliputra, "At the confluence of this river (the Ganges) with another (the Erannoboas) is situated Palibothra, a city 80 stadia in length and 15 in breadth. It is of the shape of a parallelogram, and is surrounded by a wooden wall pierced with loop holes for the discharge of arrows."[2] This wooden wall was crowned with 560 towers and had four and sixty gates. The palace of the king was no less sumptuous and magnificent than the palaces of Susa and Ecbatana and attached to it was a goodly park.

In 1876 whilst digging a tank at Patna the excavators found a line of palisades of strong timber at a depth of 12 to 15 feet. In 1892 Dr. Waddell found traces of this old wooden wall at several places in the neighbourhood of Patna, "and in every case the tops of the beams were over 18 feet below the present level of the ground." In course of the excavations carried on at Kumrahar, Bulandi Bagh and other sites in the neighbourhood of Patna under the direction of Dr. Waddell in 1896 and 1897 remains of wooden walls consisting of enormous posts were unearthed at about the same depth (18 feet) below the surface. At one spot the individual posts seemed connected by transverse planks or cross bars; at another the posts were clamped together with bands of iron.[3] Two of the posts unearthed by Dr. Waddell and belonging to the class connected by cross-bars are fixed on the southern wall of the Bharhut gallery (Nos. 5606 and 5607) of the Archæological Section of the Indian Museum, Calcutta.

If Dr. Waddell discovered what he believed to be the remains of the great city wall of Pataliputra described by Megasthenes, Sir Ratan Tata's excavations carried on by the late Dr. Spooner brought to light remains of huge wooden buildings. At Bulandi Bagh, at a depth of 22 feet, Dr. Spooner came upon the remains of a flooring composed of a series of squared timbers laid north and south and at their ends fitted into sockets in the upright timbers of the walls. This flooring was traced for nearly *three hundred and fifty feet* eastward. The western wall consisted of two slanting beams evidently

[1] C. H. I., I, p. 411.

[2] McCrindle, *Ancient India*, Westminster, 1901, p. 42.

[3] Waddell, pp. 22-26.

supporting cross or tie beams measuring 14 feet 6 inches from edge to edge. The tops or eastern ends of the slanting beams were 10 feet below the grass on the surface of the ground and their western ends at least 24 feet below. On two sides of the flooring from its western extremity marked by the slanting beams ran two parallel walls, one on the north and the other on the south, made up of very massive and carefully squared beams (about 2 feet square) with planking laid on them on the exterior. These upright timbers of the walls go down to a depth of nearly 27 feet, that is to say, 5 feet below the floor. The upright timbers of the side walls could be traced for 15 or 16 feet from the upper or western end to the east though the flooring extends beyond them for nearly 350 feet.[1] From such scanty details it is futile to attempt a reconstruction of the building or buildings that stood on the timber flooring. But we may safely conclude that here we come across the remains of a magnificent structure of the early Maurya period.

At Kumrahar in the neighbourhood of Bulandi Bagh, at site No. 1, to the south of the remains of the Maurya pillared hall to be dealt with presently, Dr. Spooner discovered seven platforms each 30 feet in length, 5 feet 4 inches in width and $4\frac{1}{4}$ feet in height from the base. All these platforms "show the stumps of upright wooden posts at intervals on either side, while other upright posts stand here and there between the platforms and not visibly connected with them. The most noticeable feature of these posts is that they overtop the actual platforms, and that, whereas throughout that portion which rises above the bases of the latter they have all suffered severe decay, underneath the level of the ground on which the platforms stand, they not only descend for another 5′ 7″, but are in absolutely pristine condition where they are so embedded......The presence at either end of each of the outer logs forming the long sides of the platforms, of a rectangular cutting which penetrates only to one half the depth of the log. These cuttings taken collectively form vertical lines of square holes at either end of each side of each platform, and can only have served for the support of something inserted into them."[2] One of the platforms has a semi-circular opening cut away on one side in the middle of which is a shallow circular brick-lined pit. Dr. Spooner is unable to offer any definite explanation of the purpose of the platforms and the pit, but notes "It is not impossible, however, that the platforms, which seem to rise from a level some feet lower than the floor of the building (*i.e.* the pillared hall) are themselves older than the pillared hall, but I cannot bring myself to believe that this is probable." The only explanation of the platforms that suggests itself to me is that they are the foundations of an older pillared building, each platform intended to support a row of thick and heavy columns of wood and the posts that even in their present decayed condition overtop the platforms probably supported the flooring of wooden planks. The wooden beams at the extremity of each pair of platforms inserted crosswise in the square holes of their side beams were intended to support the columns attached to the side

[1] A. R., A. S. I., E. C., 1915-16, pp. 27-28.
[2] A. S. I.. A. R.. 1912-13, p. 73.

walls of the building and fixed between the platforms. Dr. Spooner examined one of the platforms by removing the logs or beams one by one. About the quality of the wood work he writes :—

"The platform was found to be merely a solid accumulation of logs. But the neatness and accuracy with which it had been put together, as well as the preservation of the ancient wood, whose edges were so perfect that the very lines of jointure were indistinguishable, evoked the admiration of all who witnessed the experiment. The whole was built up with a precision and a reasoned care that could not possibly be excelled to-day, and which I fancy is only rarely, if ever, equalled in India. The vertical piles of logs were most neatly stepped each underlying log being advanced an inch or two beyond the one above it, and each horizontal layer was bound together by accurately dressed planks of wood on which the several logs of the layer were threaded. To insure greater strength still, the outer log of the layer which rested on the ground was pegged down into the earth by upright pegs fully three feet in length ; and the whole pile was again still further bound together by the upright posts along the sides, between which and the actual sides of the platform a certain amount of wooden packing appears to have been introduced for greater firmness. In short the construction was the absolute perfection of such work, and those of us who had the privilege of observing it were taught a salutary lesson in regard to the often boasted superiority of our own times. The builders who erected those platforms would find little indeed to learn in the field of their own art, could they return to earth to day. Though, why such pains were taken to ensure the maximum of strength and solidity in the platforms, unless they were really designed to support some enormous weight, is not at all apparent." [1]

The discovery of the remains of such stupendous wooden buildings at Pataliputra confirms the statements of Arrian and Strabo based on the testimony of Megasthenes. Other discoveries of Dr. Spooner at Pataliputra strengthen the view suggested by the style and technique of the edict-bearing columns that Aśoka derived his inspiration from Persepolis. To the north of the wooden platforms referred to above Dr. Spooner traced at a depth of 17 feet or over, the remains of a pillared hall in which stone columns were used. Out of eight rows of ten columns each, Dr. Spooner discovered the entire lower part of the shaft of only one in almost perfect condition, smooth and polished right down to the base, and measuring in length 14 feet 3 inches, and inferred the existence of others from heaps of fragments of polished sandstone and ash pits in which they had sunk lying regularly at a distance of 15 feet from centre to centre of the heaps and the underlying ash circles. The history of this Maurya pillared hall is thus reconstructed by Dr. Spooner. The hall had a wooden floor and a wooden roof and the pillars stood on wooden bases and supported a wooden superstructure. In course of time the hall was flooded and covered with a belt of silt 8 or 9 feet thick. After the final subsidence of the flood the hall still stood inside about 11 feet high between the silt and

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[1] A. S. I., A. R., 1912-13, p. 76.

the ceiling and was again utilised for residential purposes. Then somewhere about the 4th and 5th centuries A. D. the hall was burnt down. The fire not only reduced the massive superstructure and roof to ashes, but cracked off innumerable fragments from that portion of the columns that were visible above the silt and by expanding the metal bolts which fitted into their socket holes caused the vertical cleavage which the larger fragments show. The surviving portions of the columns buried in the belt of silt began to sink when their wooden supports decayed drawing in their wake fragments and ashes to fill up the circular holes left by their steady downward progress. Dr. Spooner thus notices the resemblance between this Mauryan pillared hall at Pataliputra and the famous Hall of Hundred Columns erected at Persepolis by Darius the Great :—

" Whereas no other structure of really early date in ancient India disclosed an arrangement of pillars in square bays over the whole floor the hall at Kumrahar did show this otherwise unparalleled arrangement, and this was identical with the arrangement of the pillars in the Achæmenian hall. The columns themselves moreover showed a technique in their polished surface which is not only known to have been un-Indian, and outside the line of Indian architectural development, but which again is identical with Persepolitan workmanship. To be sure the shafts in the Hall of a Hundred Columns are fluted, while ours are plain, but then plain polished shafts are also met with at Persepolis, and all the known Aśokan columns with their bell-shaped Persepolitan capitals are always smooth, so that this was itself more of a proof of interchange than argument against it."[1]

The resemblance in the workmanship of the columns of the hall of hundred (?) columns at Pataliputra with the edict-bearing columns of Aśoka leads us to the conclusion that this hall was probably built under the direction of the consecrator of those columns. It seems to me that this adoption of the Persepolitan style of building at Pataliputra was not the normal result of the contact of the Achæmenian and Indian cultures, but was due to conscious adoption of the plan of the Achæmenian hall of public audience by the Mauryan emperor as a part of the paraphernalia of his imperialism which was based, like the imperialism of Darius I, on a claim of world conquest and universal dominion obtained, unlike Darius, not by war, but by peaceful means.

IV. THE IMPERIALISM OF AŚOKA

The idea of world conquest and dominion of the whole earth is given prominence in the later Vedic literature. In a late book of the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa of the Rigveda, after the usual Rājasūya or the consecration of the king, a ceremony called the Mahābhisheka or the great anointing of kings is provided, and in connection with this ceremony it is said (viii. 15), " If he who knows thus should desire of a Kshatriya, ' May he be with all victories (*sarvā jitī-rjayeta*), find all the worlds, attain the superiority, pre-eminence and supremacy over

[1] A. R., A. S. I., E. C., 1913-14, p. 51.

all kings, and overlordship (*sāmrājyam*), paramount rule, self rule, sovereignty, supreme authority, kingship, great kingship, and suzerainty; may he be all encompassing, possessed of all the earth (*sārvabhauma*), possessed of all life, from the one end up to the further side of the earth bounded by the ocean sole ruler (*āntādā parārddhāt prithivyai samudraparyantayā ekarāṭ*),' he should anoint him with this great anointing of Indra."[1] Baudhāyana says in his Śrautasūtra (15, 1), "He who performs the Horse Sacrifice (*Aśvamedha*) becomes the conqueror (*vijitī*) and the king of all the earth (*rājā sārvabhauma*)." But in fact the later Vedic texts reveal, in that limited portion of the Āryāvarta or Northern India which may be termed Vedic India, not a confederation of states under a *Sārvabhauma*, but a number of small independent kingdoms like the Gandhāras, Uśīnaras, Kurus, Pañchālas, Vaśas, Kāśis, Kośalas and Videhas.

In the early Pali Buddhist literature there is a considerable extension of the political horizon. The Aṅgas, the Magadhas and the Kaliṅgas of Eastern India and the Avantīs, the Chedis and the Assakas of Central and Southern India are included within the holy middle land. But the normal political condition of this early Buddhist India is also the same as that of Vedic India consisting of a number of separate states (called Mahājanapadas) and not a union or federation under a Sārvabhauma or overlord. But the conception of the rājā Sārvabhauma called *rājā chakkavatti* (Chakravartin) or the wheel-turning king in the Buddhist and the Jaina literatures has undergone a considerable change. The stock description of a rājā chakkavattī occurs in several texts (Selasutta of the Sutta-nipāta[2], the Mahāpadana Suttanta and Lakkhana Suttanta of the Dīghanikāya). It is said in these texts that for one possessing thirty-two marks of the superman (*mahāpurusha*) two careers lie open and none other. If he live in the house he becomes:—

rājā hoti chakka-vatti dhammiko dhamma-rājā cāturanto vijitāvī janapadatthāvariya-ppatto satta-ratana-samannāgato ....so imaṁ paṭhaviṁ sāgara-pariyantaṁ adaṇḍena asatthena dhammena abhivijiya ajjhāvasati.

"A sovran overlord, a righteous king, ruling in righteousness, lord of the four quarters of the earth, conqueror, the protector of his people, possessor of the seven precious things........ He establishes supremacy over this earth to its ocean bounds, having conquered it not by the scourge, not by the sword, but by Dhamma."

But if such a person go forth from the house to the homeless state he becomes an Arahant, a Buddha Supreme. So a Rājā Chakravartin is really an imperial complement of the Buddha. In the Buddhist and Jaina literatures lives of several Chakravartins are narrated. But they are more or less legendary figures. In the Divyāvadāna (p. 368) Aśoka is called *chaturbhāga-chakravartī dhārmiko dharmarāja*, "the supreme ruler of the four quarters, the righteous, the lord of righteousness." The story of Aśoka's reign as told by himself in his rock and pillar edicts bears witness to the fact that he really assumed the role of

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[1] Arthur Berridale Keith, *Rigveda Brahmanas*, Cambridge, Mass, 1920, p. 331.

[2] *Sutta-nipāta*, p. 99; *Dialogues*, 2, p. 13, etc.

a Rājā Chakravartin and Dharmarāja. In fact he is the only Rājā Chakravartin known to history. In his thirteenth rock edict Aśoka tells us how he began his career as a conqueror by conquering Kaliṅga with the sword and how the destruction and miseries caused by his victorious campaign in Kaliṅga compelled him to change his method of conquest and to undertake the conquest of the world by dharma (morality). The story is thus narrated :—

"When King Devānaṁpriya Priyadarśin had been anointed eight years, (the country of) the Kaliṅgas was conquered by (him). One hundred and fifty thousand were the men who were deported thence, one hundred thousand in number were those who were slain there, and many times as many those who died. After that, now that (the country of) the Kaliṅgas has been taken, Devānaṁpriya (is devoted) to a zealous study of Dharma, to the love of Dharma, and to the instruction (of people) in Dharma. This is the repentance of Devānaṁpriya on account of his conquest of (the country of) the Kaliṅgas." (Hultzsch).

So Aśoka substituted conquest by Dharma (*Dharma-vijaya*) for conquest by sword and vigorously pushed it over the "four quarters" of the known world. He says in the same rock edict :—

"And this conquest has been won repeatedly by Devānaṁpriya both [here] and among all (his) borderers, even as far as (the distance of) six hundred *yojanas*, where the Yona King named Antiyoka (is ruling), and beyond this Antiyoka, (where) four-4-kings are ruling), (*viz.* the king) named Turamaya, (the king) named Antikini, (the king) named Maka, (and the king) named Alikasudara, (and) towards the south, (where) the Choḍas and Pāṇḍyas (are ruling) as far as Tāmraparṇī.

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"Even those to whom the envoys of Devānaṁpriya do not go, having heard of the duties of Dharma, the ordinances, (and) the instruction in Dharma of the Devānampriya, are conforming to Dharma and will conform to (it)" (Hultzsch).

Antiyoka referred to here is the Seleucid king Antiochus II. Theos of Syria who reigned from B. C. 262-246 : Turamaya is Ptolemy II Philadelphus of Egypt (B. C. 287-247) ; Antikini is Antigonus Gonatus of Macedonia (B. C. 276-239) ; Maka is Magas of Cyrene (B. C. c300-c. 250) ; Alikasudara is probably Alexander of Corinth (B. C. 252-c. 244). All these Greek kings were alive from B. C. 252-250 and so the thirteenth rock edict must have been issued within this limit. Again in the second separate rock edict of Dhauli and Jagauḍa it is said :—

"It might occur to (my) unconquered borderers (to ask) : 'What does the king desire with reference to us ?' This alone is my wish with reference to the borderers, (that) they may learn (that) the king desires this, (that) they may not be afraid of me, but may have confidence in me ; (that) they may obtain only happiness from me, not misery ; (that) they may learn this, (that) the king will forgive them what can be forgiven ; that they may (be induced)

by me (to) practise Dharma; (and that) they may attain (happiness) both (in) this world and (in) the other world." (Hultzsch).

Now what is this Dharma of Aśoka through which he attempted to conquer the world? It is thus defined in the Brahmagiri rock inscription "Obedience must be rendered to mother and father, likewise to elders; firmness (of compassion) must be shown towards animals; the truth must be spoken; these same moral virtues must be practised." (Hultzsch).

In the third rock-edict:—"Meritorious is obedience to father and mother. Liberality to friends, acquaintances and relatives, to Brāhmaṇas and Śramaṇas is meritorious. Abstention from killing animals is meritorious. Moderation in expenditure (and) moderation in possession are meritorious." Again in the second pillar-edict:—("To practise) Dharma is meritorious; but what does Dharma include? (It includes) few sins, many virtuous deeds, compassion, liberality, truthfulness (and) purity."

If from the edicts of Aśoka that give his precepts and describe his practice we turn to the Pali Buddhist texts wherein the duties of the Rājā Chakravartin or the wheel-turning king are defined we are struck by the points of similarity in purport between the two sets of documents. In the Chakkavatti-sihanāda-suttana of the Dīghanikāya (26) the duty of Rājā Chakravartin is thus stated by Dalhanemi to his son:—

"This, dear son, that thou, leaning on the Dharma (the Law of truth and righteousness)........shouldst provide the right watch, ward and protection for thine own folk, for the army, for the nobles, for vassals, for Brāhmans and householders, for town and country dwellers, for the religious world, and for beasts and birds. Throughout thy kingdom let no wrong doing prevail. And whosoever in thy kingdom is poor, to him let wealth be given.

"And when, dear son, in thy kingdom men of religious life .... shall come to thee from time to time, and question thee concerning what is good and what is bad......thou shouldst hear what they have to say, and thou shouldst deter them from evil, and bid them take up what is good."[1]

The last regulation relating to men of religious life reminds us of some of the minor pillar edicts of Aśoka (on the Allahabad-Kosam, the Sāñchī and the Sarnath pillars) and the following passage in the seventh edict on the Delhi-Topra pillar:—"Some (*Mahāmātras*) were ordered by me to busy themselves with the affairs of the *Saṁgha*; likewise others were ordered by me to busy themselves with the Brāhmaṇas (and) Ājīvikas; others were ordered by me to busy themselves also with the Nirgranthas; others were ordered by me to busy themselves also with various (other) sects; thus different *Mahāmātras* (are busying themselves) specially with different congregations." (Hultzsch).

According to the legend narrated in the Chakkavatti-Sihanāda and other Suttantas, before a Rājā becomes a Chakravartin the "celestial wheel" reveals itself completely before him. The Rājā sprinkles water over the wheel and prays, "Roll onward, O lord wheel! Go forth and overcome (*abhibijinātu*),

[1] *Dialogues*, 3, p. 62.

O lord wheel!" The wheel then rolls onward towards the region of the east followed by the king with his army. The king takes up his abode where the wheel stops. Then all the rival kings of the region of the east come to the Rājā Chakkavatti and say, "Come O Mahārāja (the great king). Welcome, O Mahārāja: All is thine, O Mahārāja: Instruct (*anusāsa*) us, O Mahārāja." Rājā Chakkavatti says in reply, "Ye shall slay no living thing. Ye shall not take that which has not been given. Ye shall not act wrongly touching bodily desire. Ye shall speak no lies. Ye shall drink no intoxicating drink. Enjoy your possessions as you have been wont to do." The wheel then proceeds in turn to the region of the south, of the west and of the north, and the kings of these regions submit to, and are instructed in turn by the Rājā Chakkavatti in the same manner. This conquest of the four regions by the Rājā Chakkavatti led by the celestial wheel may also be designated Dharmavijaya, for the allegiance of the rival kings does not go beyond the acceptance of his moral precepts.

Though Aśoka so often speaks of the Dharmavijaya, he nowhere refers to the wheel, nor does he assume the title of Chakravartin. But it appears to me that this significant omission is made good by the capital of his Sarnath column. The topmost member of this column was a wheel which undoubtedly symbolised the Sarnath sermon of Gautama Buddha called Dharmachakra-pravartana, "the turning of the wheel of Dharma (law)." This great wheel of which a few fragments have been recovered was placed on four magnificent semi-lions that stand back to back. On the abacus below these four standing lions are carved four wheels with a lion, an elephant, a bull and a horse respectively in full speed between each pair. These wheels appear to me to represent the lesser wheel of Dharma turned by King Aśoka that enabled him to conquer or carry out the Dharmavijaya in the four regions as distinguished from the greater wheel turned by Gautama Buddha near Benares and the walking bull and the running horse probably indicate that the royal wheel is in motion. According to Vincent A. Smith the four animals symbolize the four quarters of the world—the elephant, the guardian of the east; the horse, of the south; the bull, of the west; and the lion, of the north.[1] Dharmavijayin, 'conqueror through Dharma,' and Chakravartin, 'the royal turner of the wheel (of Dharma)', are really synonymous. Now it may be asked, whether the noble idea of Dharmavijaya originated with Aśoka, or he was inspired by the tales of the Chakravartī kings of old told in the Buddhist Suttas. The latter supposition is not tenable because the Suttantas in which the stories of the Chakkavattis are told, Mahāsudassana (Dīghanikāya 17) and Chakkavatti-Sihanāda (Dīghanikāya 26) are probably post-Aśokan in date. The name Mahāsudassana (Mahāsudarśana) has the same meaning as Aśoka's title Piyadasi (Priyadarśin) and the Dharma-prāsāda, the palace of righteousness, that Viśvakarman (Vissakamma) is said to have built for the king Mahāsudarśana at Kuśāvatī[2] with pillared halls and balustrades is evidently modelled on the palace of Aśoka at Pataliputra. Aśoka succeeded to an empire that extended from

[1] H. F. A. I. C., p. 59.
[2] *Dialogues*, 2, pp. 212-215.

Afghanistan in the north-west to Mysore in the south. To this empire he added Kaliṅga by war and would have gone on further expanding it by the same method if the slaughter and miseries had not touched his heart and induced him to exchange Dharma for the sword as an instrument of conquest. In the meantime Aśoka had embraced Buddhism. Aśoka says in his rock-inscriptions (minor rock edicts), " Two and half years and somewhat more (have passed) since I am openly a Śākya (or Buddha-Śākya or *upāsaka*, 'lay worshipper'). But (I had) not been very zealous. But a year and somewhat more (has passed) since I have visited the Saṁgha and have been very zealous " (Hultzsch). The Dharma taught by Aśoka is not exactly Buddhism; it is a synthesis of " the essentials of all sects " made by a very tolerant man, and the end it has in view is not Nirvāṇa, but happiness in this world and the attainment of the great heaven after death. This Dharma is the code of morality taught by a wise ruler of millions and is free from the spirit of intolerance inherent in the teachings of monks and ordinary religious missionaries. It is also the handiwork of a practical man who insists on " moderation in expenditure (and) moderation in possession " and discourages that abandon which makes so strong an appeal to the average Indian, for Aśoka ordains in the seventh rock edict:—

" But even one who (practises) great liberality, (but) does not possess self-control, purity of mind and firm devotion is very mean " (Hultzsch).

Aśoka's Dharmavijaya or the conquest of the world through Dharma is not a missionary movement, but a definite imperial policy—it is Mauryan imperialism perfectly pacified. Like the other elements in the environment of Aśoka, Buddhism, the religion of his choice, must have considerably influenced this policy; but this influence was only indirect.

The other factor that influenced Aśoka in shaping his policy of Dharmavijaya was the Achæmenian imperialism. The Mauryan imperialism was an upshot of the Achæmenian imperialism and Aśoka built his policy on that basis. Historically the idea of world conquest and the dominion of the " four regions " or " four quarters " originated with the rulers of Babylonia and Assyria.[1] But this ambition was never realised by the lords of the Euphratean Valley to the extent to which it was realised by the Achæmenian Cyrus the Great of Persia. His son Cambyses added Egypt to the empire, and Darius, son of Hystaspes the Achæmenian reconquered, enlarged and consolidated it. In one of his Suez inscriptions commemorating the completion of the canal from the Nile to the Red Sea Darius says, " I (am) Darius the great king, king of kings, king of countries possessing all people, (king) of this great earth far and wide."[2] As visible symbols of the power and wealth of this vast empire Darius erected magnificent buildings at Persepolis in imitation of the mighty rulers of Assyria and Egypt. After Darius I, as the Persian empire declined in power, the Persian imperialism gained in prestige and

[1] Jastrow, pp. 136, 186.
[2] Tolman, p. 50.

ultimately conquered its conqueror. Alexander the Great invaded the Persian empire as the captain-general of the Greeks elected at a general assembly held at the Isthmus of Corinth to avenge the wrongs of Greece. But after overthrowing the Persian empire (330 B.C.) he fell an easy prey to Persian imperialism. At Persepolis where he stayed for four months after the battle of Arabela he used to sit on the throne of the kings of Persia under a golden canopy. When Alexander did so for the first time, an old Corinthian, a friend of his father Philip, wept and exclaimed, "What a delight have those Greeks missed, who died without having seen Alexander seated upon the throne of Darius" (Plutarch). Alexander also began to put on the robe of the Persian kings. "The Median habit however, he thought, made too stiff and exotic an appearance, and therefore he did not take the long breeches, or the sweeping train, or the tiara; but, adopting something between the Median and the Persian mode, contrived vestments less pompous than the former, and more majestic than the latter. At first, he used his dress only before the barbarians, or his particular friends within doors; but in process of time he began to wear it when he appeared in public, and sat for the despatch of business. This was a mortifying sight to the Macedonians; yet, as they admired his other virtues, they thought he might be suffered to gratify himself a little, and enjoy his vanity" (Plutarch). Other measures adopted by Alexander the Great to bring about a fusion of Hellenism and Persianism are thus described by Plutarch :—

"After this he accommodated himself more than ever to the manner of the Asiatics, and at the same time persuaded them to adopt some of the Macedonian fashions; for by a mixture of both he thought an union might be promoted, much better than by force, and his authority maintained even when he was at a distance. For the same reason he elected thirty thousand boys, and gave them masters to instruct them in the Grecian literature, as well as train them to arms in the Macedonian manner."

Alexander insisted on all paying respects to him in the Persian fashion by prostration. On returning to Persia after his Indian expedition the first thing he did was to present money to the matrons according to the ancient custom of the Persian kings. At Susa he took Darius's daughter Statira to wife and also married his friends to Persian ladies. One of these friends was the young Seleucus, afterwards known as the Nicator, who married Apama, the daughter of Spitamenes. Alexander died soon after (323 B.C.) before he had time to carry further his policy of fusion.

Plutarch reports that when in 326 B.C. Alexander the Great was encamped on the bank of the Beas a young man named Chandragupta (Sandrocottus or Androcottus) "had a sight of him", and after the withdrawal of the Macedonian army frequently observed, "Alexander was within a very little of making himself master of the whole country; with such hatred and contempt was the reigning prince regarded, on account of profligacy of his manners and meanness of his birth." Within a couple of years of Alexander's death Chandragupta made himself master of the Prāchya kingdom of which Pataliputra was

the capital and subsequently added the Punjab to his dominion. In 312 B.C., starting from Syria with a body of 800 foot and 200 horse lent by Ptolemy I of Egypt, Seleucus finally obtained possession of Babylonia which had been assigned to him in the second partition of the vast empire of Alexander at Triparadisus in Northern Syria in 321 B.C. About 305 or 304, after making himself master of Persia and Bactria (Northern Afghanistan), Seleucus invaded India ostensibly to recover possession of Alexander's dominion there. But the result of this invasion was an alliance with the Mauryan king Chandragupta, sealed, it is said, by marriage. Chandragupta continued in possession of the Macedonian dominion on the east of the Indus. On the west of that river Kabul, Kandahar, Herat and a portion of Baluchistan were also assigned to him. It is usually held that Seleucus transferred these territories to the Maurya king. But it is doubtful whether Seleucus had yet succeeded in making himself master of them. Till the battle of Ipsus in 301 B.C. the prestige of Antigonus stood high in the east, and what seems to have really taken place between Chandragupta and Seleucus was a treaty of alliance based on a repartition of the easternmost provinces of the Macedonian empire hitherto owing allegiance to Antigonus, by which Seleucus placed the eastern frontier of his dominion on a secure basis. With 500 elephants that Chandragupta presented to him Seleucus marched to Asia Minor, effected junction with Lysimachus and gave battle to Antigonus at Ipsus. According to Plutarch (Life of Demetrius) these elephants decided the fate of the battle. Demetrius, son of Antigonus, with his best cavalry, fell upon Antiochus, the son of Seleucus, put him to flight, and pressed the pursuit too far to rejoin the infantry fighting under his father, the elephants of Seleucus having occupied the intermediate space. Great part of the infantry of Antigonus then went over to Seleucus; the rest were put to the rout and Antigonus himself fell under a shower of arrows leaving Seleucus master of Western Asia.

The friendly relations thus established between the Mauryan and the Seleucid houses continued unabated from generation to generation. Seleucus sent Magasthenes as his envoy to the court of Chandragupta repeatedly. Chandragupta is said to have sent certain strange drugs to Seleucus evidently by his own representative. Antiochus I, the successor of Seleucus, sent Deimachus of Platæa as envoy to the court of Bindusāra (Amitrochades=Amitraghāta), the son of Chandragupta. Bindusāra was evidently fond of things Greek and wrote to Antiochus I to buy and forward to him sweet wine, dried figs, and a sophist or teacher of Greek Philosophy.[1] Antiochus wrote back, "We shall send you dried figs and sweet wine; but it is not lawful in Greek to sell a sophist."[2] Bindusāra's attempt to get hold of a Greek sophist through Antiochus I recalls Alexander the Great's inducing the Indian sage (gymnosophist) Kalanos to visit him through the intercession of the Raja of Taxila and leads to the conclusion that in that period of Indian History the best minds among the Indians and the Greeks were very eager to learn from each other. This important fact should not be lost sight of when analysing the

[1] C. H. I., I, p. 433; Hultzsch, pp. xxxiv-xxxv.
[2] E. R. Bevan, *The House of Seleucus*, London, 1902, Vol. I, p. 297.

different elements in the cultures of the two peoples and the influence of the one upon the other. When Kalanos, whom Alexander held in honour and esteem, decided to immolate himself in a funeral pyre in spite of all the remonstrances of the mighty king, the whole Macedonian army attended the ceremony. Alexander's attitude towards Kalanos is evidently typical of the high esteem in which the cultured Greeks in those days held the Indian philosophers.

Chandragupta Maurya had to be satisfied with the rank of ordinary royalty like Seleucus and other successors of Alexander and could never aspire to the universal dominion like Darius I or Alexander. He had enough to do to consolidate territories like the dominion of the Nanda dynasty and the easternmost provinces of the Persian empire that had never been under one sceptre before. Of his son Bindusāra we know very little. But it may be safely asserted that under Bindusāra the administration of the empire, the foundations of which had been well laid by his father, must have gained stability. So when Aśoka ascended the Mauryan throne he had leisure to entertain loftier visions. Among the states that grew up on the ruins of the short-lived empire of Alexander the Great, the Mauryan empire was not only far wider in extent, but now occupied a position of advantage over others in that, while the Greek states were constantly at war among themselves, peace reigned in the empire of Aśoka. So the moral authority that Aśoka claimed for himself as Dharmavijayin or conqueror of the world through Dharma was not quite unjustified, and, even probably recognised by the rulers of the Greek states in the west and the Dravidian states in the south who allowed him to push on his educational (*i.e.*, Dharmavijaya) and philanthropic activities in their dominions. As we have already seen, Aśoka states in his thirteenth rock-edict that his *dūtas* or envoys carried on *Dharmavijaya* in the independent Greek and Dravidian kingdoms (p. 14). It is stated in the second rock edict:—

"Everywhere in the dominions of king Devānāṁpriya Priyadarśin, and likewise among (his) borderers, such as the Choḍas, the Pāṇḍyas, the Satiyaputra, the Keralaputra, even Tāmraparṇī, the Yona king Antiyoka and also the kings who are the neighbours of this Antiyoka,—everywhere two (kinds of) medical treatment were established by king Devānāṁpriya Priyadarśin, (*viz.*) medical treatment for men and medical treatment for cattle. And wherever there were no herbs that are beneficial to men and beneficial to cattle, everywhere they were caused to be imported and planted." (Hultzsch).

That this is no mere boast, that Aśoka was keenly interested in the welfare of the population of the neighbouring kingdoms is indirectly proved by his edicts and monuments as far as the Seleucid kingdom is concerned.

V. THE EDICTS OF AŚOKA.

The monumental edicts of Aśoka that explain his Dharma and contain the regulations that he issued for its propagation occupy a unique place not

only among the Indian epigraphic records but among human documents in general. Aśoka does not claim originality for his Dharma, but in the Brahmagiri and Siddapura rock inscriptions, after briefly defining Dharma, he says, "This is an ancient rule (*esā porānā pakitī*), and this conduces to long life." Aśoka does not also claim that among kings it was he who for the first time cherished the desire of promoting the progress of man by the promotion of Dharma. In the seventh pillar edict issued when he had been anointed twenty-seven years, Aśoka says—

"The following occurred to me.

'On one hand, in times past kings had this desire, that men might (be made to) progress by an adequate promotion of Dharma; (but) on the other hand, men were not made to progress by an adequate promotion of Dharma.

'How then might men be made to conform to Dharma?

'How might men be (made to) progress by an adequate promotion of Dharma?"

"How could I elevate them by the promotion of Dharma?"

Kings of the past referred to by Aśoka are of course primarily the kings of Magadha who flourished before him. In answer to these questions Aśoka gives an account of the measures to be adopted—and among kings he adopted for the first time—in connection with the promotion of Dharma. These measures fall into two groups. One group comprises administrative measures such as issuing proclamations and instructions to officers, arranging tours of inspection, and appointment of new officers like Dharmamahāmātras; the other group consists of monuments for the promotion of Dharma erected by Aśoka. These measures are thus briefly described in the seventh pillar-edict:—

"Having in view this very (matter), I have set up pillars of Dharma (*dhaṁmathaṁbhāni kaṭāni*), appointed Mahāmātras of Dharma (and) issued (proclamations) of Dharma."

Other measures adopted are described elsewhere. Thus in the Sahasram and other rock-inscriptions it is enjoined:—

"And cause ye this matter to be engraved on rocks. And where there are stone pillars (*silāthaṁbhā*) here (in my dominions), there also cause (it) to be engraved."

In the fourth rock-edict it is said:—

"But now, in consequence of the practice of Dharma on the part of king Devānāṁpriya Priyadarśin, the sound of drums (of war) has become the sound of Dharma, showing the people representations of aerial chariots, representations of elephants, masses of fire (*i.e.*, radiant superhuman beings), and other divine figures."

And one consequence of the popular exhibition of divine figures is thus stated in the Rupnāth and other rock inscriptions:—"Those gods who during that time had been unmingled (with men) in Jambudvīpa, have now been made (by me) mingled (with them)."

The seventh pillar edict refers only to the pillars of Dharma (*i.e.*, edict bearing pillars) among the monuments that Aśoka erected for the promotion

of Dharma among men. As the pillar-edicts and the rock-edicts are linked, pillars of Dharma connote rock cut inscriptions also among the novelties introduced by Aśoka. The reference to the mingling with men in India (Jambudvīpa) of gods that were not mingled before indicates that the display of "divine figures" was not a common practice before Aśoka, or not usually organised by the ruling power for the edification of the people. Absence of rock inscriptions, inscribed stone pillars and divine figures or sculptures that may be assigned to the pre-Aśokan period confirms these statements of Aśoka. All the known monuments of Aśoka, inscriptions, monolithic columns, and sculptures, disclose, not slavish imitation, but intimate knowledge, of the Achæmenian monuments and skilful adaptation of their best elements. This could hardly have been possible unless Aśoka himself had studied those monuments from descriptions and had copies prepared by or under the supervision of persons specially deputed for the purpose; and Aśoka could hardly have realised the importance of these monuments or got opportunities of gaining adequate knowledge of them unless the relations between the Mauryan empire and the Seleucid kingdom had been as close as the second and the thirteenth rock-edicts presuppose. Senart has already pointed out the strong resemblance in form between the inscriptions of the Achæmenian kings and the edicts of Aśoka. Each edict of Aśoka begins with, "King Devānāmpriya Priyadarśin speaks thus." M. Sénart writes, "Now, so far as I know, this formula is an absolutely isolated example in Indian epigraphy. It makes its appearance with our inscriptions, and after them, appears no more, in spite of the influence which the example of so powerful a sovereign would be expected to exercise. . . . . In the entire series of the inscriptions of the Achæmenides, from Darius to Artaxerxes Ochus, the phrase *thatey Darayavaush Kshayathiya*, 'thus saith the king Darius,' or its equivalent, *thatey Kshayarsha*, etc., inevitably forms the preamble of each of the proclamations. In both cases, this phrase in the third person is immediately succeeded by the use of the first person, and we are still further justified in drawing attention to this curious fact that, again in both cases, the same word (*dipi*, *lipi*) is used to designate the inscriptions, and that, as we have seen, we are led to admit, on altogether independent grounds, that the Indian form of the word was originally borrowed from Persia."[1] Darius the Great also set the example of introducing moral exhortations in his inscriptions. Thus in the Behistan inscription he says :—

"Says Darius the king: For this reason Ahura Mazda bore me aid and the other gods which are, because I was not an enemy, I was not a deceiver, I was not a wrong-doer, neither I nor my family; according to rectitude (I ruled), nor against the slave (?) nor the lowly (?) did I exercise oppression; the man who helped my house, him well I esteemed, I esteemed; (the man) who would destroy it, him well I punished, I punished."[2]

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[1] Ind. Ant., XX (1891), pp. 255-56.

[2] Tolman, p. 27.

At the end of the Naks-i-Rustam inscription (*a*) of Darius occurs this exhortation :—

"O man, what (is) the precept of Ahura Mazda, may it not seem to thee repugnant ; do not leave the true path ; do not sin."[1]

Aśoka's accounts of the arrangements made by him for the circulation of his edicts (Rock-Edict 14 ; Kalinga Edict 1 ; Pillar-Edict 7) recall the following epigraph at the end of the Susian version of the Behistan inscription :—

"(Thus) saith Darius, the king : By the grace of Auramazda I made inscriptions in another fashion.........such as was not formerly and the great.........I made, and it was written and I.........then I sent the same inscriptions into all lands, and the people.........."[2]

The duplicate copies were evidently written on bricks and leather, and one fragment has already been found by Koldeway.[3]

These striking points of resemblance between the edicts of Aśoka and the inscription of Darius suggest, not vulgar imitation, but happy adaptation of the style of the latter by the author of the edicts. But these resemblances touch only the outer skin or frame of the edicts. The contents of the two sets of records reveal two different types of mentality. The edicts of Aśoka sound egoistical as compared to the inscriptions of Darius who repeatedly states, "By the grace of Ahura Mazda I am king ; Ahura Mazda gave me the kingdom." But the absence of such statements in the edicts of Aśoka is due to a different religious outlook. Hindus recognise three different spiritual paths. These are : (1) The path of *karman* or work which is founded on the belief that all beings, non-human, human and superhuman are subject to the Law of Karma, and one can attain happiness in this life and heaven after death by performing meritorious *karman* or works. (2) The path of *jñāna* (knowledge) though recognising the Law of Karman adds that both meritorious and wicked *karmans* lead to rebirths and final salvation is attainable by those who may earn the knowledge of Ātman or the Bodhi or the Kevala (perfect or supreme) knowledge by finally renouncing *karman.* (3) The path of Bhakti or loving faith in a Supreme Being or God who controls the destinies of all creatures. Aśoka's Dharma which holds up happiness in this life and the enjoyment of heavenly bliss after death as the reward of meritorious deeds pertains to the path of Karman in which a Supreme Being above the Law of Karman has no place, whereas the religion of Darius is related to the path of Bhakti, loving faith in the Ahura Mazda as the supreme arbiter of human destiny. It is for this reason that the edicts of Aśoka sound more egoistical than the inscriptions of Darius not only to Europeans whose outlook is more or less influenced by Christianity, but also to modern Hindus whose standpoint is now very far removed from the old world path of *karman.* Brahmanism in its earliest or pre-Upanishadic phase was in essence this path of *karman,* and though Aśoka prohibited the slaughter of animals in connection with sacrifice (rock-edict 1),

[1] Tolman, p. 45

[2] King, p. 157.

[3] Tolman, Preface.

he continued as much an *upāsaka* or lay worshipper of the Śramaṇas or Buddhist monks as of the Brahmans. In the eighth rock-edict Aśoka says in connection with his *Dharmayātrā* or tour of Dharma, "On these (tours) the following takes place, (*viz.*) visiting Śramaṇas and Brāhmaṇas and making gifts (to them), visiting the aged and supporting (them) with gold." It must not be supposed that this devotion to the Brahmanas was due to any superstitious fear, for, for a lay man, Aśoka was singularly free from superstition. He says in his first rock-edict, "And also no festival meeting must be held. For King Devānaṁpriya Priyadarśin sees much evil in festival meetings. And there are also some festival meetings which are considered meritorious by king Devānāṁpriya Priyadarśin." The festival meetings condemned are evidently the orgies connected with magical or semi-magical rites. Again in the ninth rock-edict Aśoka says :—

"Men are practising various ceremonies (*maṅgala*) during illness, at the marriage of a son or a daughter, at the birth of a child, (and) when setting out on a journey; on these and other such (occasions) men are practising many ceremonies. But in such (cases) mothers and wives are practising many and various vulgar and useless ceremonies. Now, ceremonies should certainly be practised. But these (ceremonies) bear little fruit indeed. But the following bears much fruit indeed, *viz.*, the practice of Dharma.......... For other ceremonies are of doubtful (effect). One may attain his object (by them), but he may not (do so). And they (bear fruit) in this world only. But the practice of Dharma is not restricted to time." (Hultzsch).

The ceremonies discouraged by Aśoka are probably the semi-magical and magical rites prescribed in the Atharvaveda and the folk rites of the type still practised by the Hindu women. But by adding "ceremonies should certainly be performed" Aśoka evidently encouraged those Vedic rites like the Haviryajñas or the offering of rice cakes and butter to the sacred fires that required no animal sacrifice, and it was probably as the performers of such rites and as students of the Vedic literature and sciences that Brahmans as such were recognised by Aśoka as worthy recipients of veneration and gifts. We also learn from the edicts how much devoted Aśoka was to Buddhism. In the tenth year after his coronation (B. C. 254) he went on a pilgrimage to Sambodhi (Bodh-Gaya) and ten years after (B. C. 264) to Luṁmini, the birth place of Buddha, and to the stūpa of Konākamana at Nigāli Sagar which he himself had caused to be enlarged to double its size six years before (Rumindei and Nigāli Sāgar pillar inscriptions). The Calcutta-Bairat rock inscription or 'letter to Saṁgha which seems to be earlier than all other rock and pillar-edicts' according to Hultzsch, discloses Aśoka's familiarity with the Buddhist literature and refers by name to seven texts which have been actually traced in the Pali Buddhist canon. Aśoka's active devotion to the monks of another sect, the Ājīvikas, is shown by the dedication of two rock-cut caves in the Barabar hill, 15 miles north of the city of Gaya. But Aśoka's religion cannot be called Buddhism in the modern sense of the term. His religion is the religion of the best type of Indian layman, and if any name is to be

given to it, it may be designated old world Hinduism. Like the early Vedic religion its keynote is *sukha* 'happiness', and not *duḥkha,* misery, like Buddhism. Aśoka's rationalism combined as it was with total absence of sectarian bias, was far in advance of his age, and his idea of Dharmavijaya is in advance of even our own age. The spirit of religious toleration that inspired Aśoka was not a matter of policy like that of Cyrus the Great of Persia who, it is said, "as a wise ruler, left the religious institutions of the people alone, and saw to it that this conquest should be attributed to the invitation of Marduk, the great god of Babylon. Nabonidus had carried off the sacred images of many a foreign nation; Cyrus, recognising the first fundamentals of an empire, restored them to their shrines in sympathy with the different religions of his new subjects. It was a remarkable act of enlightened vision."[1] Aśoka's toleration was deeply rooted in his genuine reverence for all religious sects. He says in his sixth pillar-edict:—

sava-pāsaṁḍā pi me pūjitā vividhāya pūjāyā.

"And all sects have been honoured by me with honours of various kinds."

These sects (pāsaṁḍā) included not only the proper Indian (Hindu) sects, but also non-Indian sects like the Greek polytheists. In the following sentence of the thirteenth rock edict Aśoka carefully notes the main difference between the Greek religion and the proper Indian sects though he includes the former among sects deserving honour:—

"There is no country where these (two) classes, (*viz.*) the Brāhmaṇas and the Śramaṇas do not exist, except among the Yonas; and there is no (place) in any country where men are not indeed attached to some sect."

Perhaps it is not right to designate Aśoka's attitude towards non-Buddhist sects by the name religious toleration, for it was a good deal more than toleration or patronising; it was an integral part of his own religion. He says in his twelfth rock-edict:—

"King Devānāṁpriya Priyadarśin is honouring all sects: ascetics or householders, with gifts and with honours of various kinds. But Devānāṁpriya does not value either gifts or honours so (highly) as (this), (*viz.*) that a promotion of the essentials of all sects should take place. This promotion of essentials (is possible) in many ways. But its root is this, *viz.*, guarding (one's) speech, (*i.e.*) that neither praising one's own sect nor blaming other sects should take place on improper occasions, or (that) it should be moderate in every case. But other sects ought to be honoured in every way....... But concord is meritorious, (*i.e.*) that they should both hear and obey each other's morals (*shamavāye vu shādhu kiti aṁnamanashā dhaṁmaṁ shune* [*y*]*uchā shushusheyu chā ti*)." (Hultzsch).

Here Aśoka clearly indicates, as the source of his Dharma, the essentials (*sāra*) according to him, of all sects (*savapāshaṁḍānam*). The aim that Aśoka had in view in undertaking the conquest of the earth through this Dharma

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[1] *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. III, Cambridge, 1925, p. 225.

was not self-aggrandisement, but the inauguration of an universal brotherhood as he distinctly declares in his eleventh rock edict :—

nāsti etārisaṁ dānaṁ yārisaṁ dhaṁma-dānaṁ dhaṁma-saṁstavo vā dhaṁma-saṁvibhāgo[vā]dhaṁmasaṁbadho vā (Girnar).

Sanskrit—*nāsti etādṛiśaṁ dānaṁ yādṛiśaṁ dharma-dānaṁ dharma-saṁstavo vā dharma-saṁvibhāgo vā dharma-sambandho vā.*

"There is no such gift as the gift of Dharma, or acquaintance through Dharma, or the distribution of Dharma, or kinship through Dharma."

This idea of universal kinship through Dharma or universal brotherhood is a further development of the idea of universal dominion entertained by Darius I and Alexander the Great. The last link in this chain is the original contribution of Aśoka himself. It is not borrowed from Buddhism, for the idea of universal brotherhood conceived by Buddhism is based on faith in the three jewels, Buddha, Dharma and Saṁgha. Aśoka excludes from his Dharma anything corresponding to Buddha or the perfectly enlightened being, and Saṁgha or a particular sect of teachers, and substitutes that which is not the monopoly of any particular sect, but is a synthesis of the *sāra* or essentials of all sects made by one who had a profound regard for them all.

VI. AŚOKAN ART

Like Aśoka's personal religion and his Dharma, his art is a synthesis of all the arts—Indian, Achæmenian, Assyrian, Hellenistic, of his age, and is therefore something that stands apart from the general course of artistic development in Eastern India. The Achæmenian model of course exercised the greatest influence. Like the Vedic religion of the Aryas of India, the Mazdaism professed by Darius who calls himself *Pārsa Pārsahya putra*, 'a Persian, the son of a Persian,' and *Ariya Ariyachitra*, 'an Aryan, of Aryan lineage,'[1] did not require temples and images, but, as the sculptures on the tombs at Naksh-i-Rustum show, worship was offered to Ahura Mazda (Auramazda) on the fire altar in the open air. The representation of Ahura Mazda hovering above with a winged circle around his middle is almost an exact copy of the emblem of the Assyrian god Ashur. The Achæmenian art of Persia is not the product of a normal course of development from primitive beginnings, but comes into being fully matured with the rise of the Achæmenian dynasty, or rather with the rise of its second line beginning with Darius, son of Hystaspes, and ceases to be with the disappearance of that line. The constructive period of this art is not even cœval with the two centuries of the duration of the line of Darius I (B.C. 521-330) and lasted only for two generations, the reigns of Darius I and his son Xerxes, that is to say, evidently as long as the artists first trained and employed by the former lived. Xerxes says in the inscription on his propylæ at Persepolis above the winged bulls :—

"Says Xerxes the great king : By the grace of Ahura Mazda, this colonnade (for the representatives) of all countries I made ; much else (that is)

[1] Nakshi-i-Rustam a, Tolman, p. 44.

beautiful (was) done throughout Persia which I did and which my father did; whatever work seems beautiful, all that we did by the grace of Ahura Mazda."[1]

There was a revival of the building operations in the reign of Artaxerxes II Mnemon who rebuilt the *apadana* built by Darius I at Susa and burnt in the reign of his grandson Artaxerxes I (B.C. 462-425).[2] According to Professor Carrotti this Achæmenian art of Persia was 'the synthesis of all the Oriental Arts;' 'it was a purely borrowed art, not one partly borrowed and then assimilated, elaborated, and developed.' About the diverse elements of which this art consists and the way in which those elements were combined Prof. Carrotti writes:—

"From Chaldaeo-Assyrian Art it took the idea of great platforms and terraces, the type of the human-headed bulls guarding the propylæ and the royal palaces, the grand and decorative conception, or at least the fundamental style of its bas-reliefs, its ornamentation in enamelled terracotta and in stuffs embroidered in coloured wool.

"From early Ionian Art it took the light graceful and lofty architecture and the plan of its buildings, with the distribution of the dwelling-rooms, the tall slender shaft of its columns, and one or two types of bases for the columns, its wooden roofs, and finally the greater perfection in the style of its bas-reliefs.

"From Egypt it borrowed the type of huge hypostyle halls, and the elements with which it composed the very curious capitals of its columns, and the second type of the base of the same, and also the elements of architectural decoration.

"To all this the Persian on his part added practical good sense of his choice among such varying elements, and finally remarkable cleverness in putting them together, combining them with harmony and real justness of proportion, and great adaptability to their environment."[3]

In carrying out the grand scheme of buildings at Susa and Persepolis foreign artists were freely employed by the great kings. Diodorus states on the testimony of an older writer whom he does not name: "Report says that the famous palaces at Persepolis, Susa and Media were built after all this wealth (of Egypt) had been conveyed to Asia, together with Egyptian artificers."[4] Pliny attests that the eminent sculptor Telephanes of Phocæa, the contemporary of Polycletes and Myron, executed many important works for Darius and Xerxes.[5] But perhaps the largest number of artizans must have been imported from Assyria and Babylonia, particularly from Babylon, where building operations on an extensive scale had been carried on by Nebuchadnezzar II (B.C. 604-561) who died forty years before the accession of Darius I. The foreign artificers were evidently employed to work out the details, the designs being the work of Persians working under the direct control of Darius I and

[1] Tolman, p. 39.
[2] Tolman, p. 48.
[3] Carrotti, pp. 87-88.
[4] 2, Per. & Chip. p. 113.
[5] *Ibid*, p. 27.

Xerxes I. It may be added here that the immense palace at Ecbatana (Hamadan) in Media with its colonnades was made of cedar and cypress wood and covered with gold and silver plates.

Seleucus Nicator and his successors introduced Hellenistic art in the Achæmenian world. Seleucus himself was a great builder of cities. The most famous among them were, Seleucia on the Tigris and Antioch on the Orontes in Syria, the capital of the Seleucid kingdom. Great works of art once adorned Antioch. A marble copy of one of these, the fortune of the city of Antioch, exists in the Vatican in Rome. The original was made by Entichides of Sycyon, a pupil of the great Lisippus. "The personified Antioch sits with a certain noble freedom, holding an ear of corn in her hand, her head crowned with flowers, and a small figure representing the river Orontes rising out of the ground at her feet. The original must have had all that dramatic effectiveness which stamps the products of Greek sculpture in the third century B. C."[1] Seleucus Nicator built a temple of Pythian Apollo. The image of Apollo put up by him in this temple was the work of the Athenian Bryaxis. The ruins of Seleucia on the Tigris which became the capital of the eastern half of the kingdom, when excavated, will probably yield the remnants of some masterpieces of Hellenestic work. The remains of the Seleucian epoch in Mesopotamia have not yet been properly investigated. The few finds that have so far been published leave no room for doubt as to the strength of the Hellenic influence. A stone head of Satyr of Hellenistic workmanship was found in the neighbourhood of Kirmanshah in Persia and is now preserved in a private collection in Berlin.[2] The portrait busts of Seleucus Nicator, Antiochus III, and Euthydemus I of Bactria are naturalistic in style (the result of the fusion of the two manners of Scopas and Lysippus).[3] The extent to which the original Seleucid kingdom was Hellenised is best indicated by the exclusive use of Greek legends on the Parthian coins.

If we are right in assuming that the imperialism of Aśoka which inspired him to undertake the conquest of the known world through Dharma is a development of the imperialism of the great kings of Persia modified by his religious views, we may further assume that in planning and constructing the state buildings and monuments for the spread of his Dharmavijaya he would, as far as possible, follow the example of Darius and Xerxes. An early step in this direction would be to build 'a colonnade (for the representatives) of all countries,' a public hall of audience on the model of the hall at Persepolis. As we have seen above (p. 11), Dr. Spooner unearthed the remains of such a hall at Kumrahar near Patna in 1912-13. But the points of difference between the Hall of Hundred Columns of Persepolis and that of Pataliputra are no less striking than the points of resemblance and deserve attention :—

(1) The shafts of all the Mauryan columns including the columns of the Hall of Hundred columns at Pataliputra of which fragments have yet been

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[1] Bevan, I, p. 213.

[2] Sarre, pp. 24-25, Plate 53.

[3] Carroti, I, p. 209.

recovered are plain. Columns with smooth shafts are conspicuous by their absence in the buildings on the great platform of Persepolis where Darius and Xerxes erected their stupendous halls, palaces and other buildings intended for secular purposes, the only examples of this type of columns known in Persia being those in the facades of the rock-cut tombs at Naksh-i-Rustam, and the solitary surviving column of the palace of Cyrus at Pasargadæ. About this latter column Perrot and Chipiez write :—

"In the latter case (column at Pasargadæ) the anomaly is to be explained by the fact that the building to which the support belonged, dates from a time when Persian art had not constituted itself, and was as yet groping to strike out a path of its own. On the contrary, the rock-cut tombs are cœval with the palaces of Darius and Xerxes, and if in them the shaft is plain it was because the vaults stood at a considerable height above ground. To have made them fluted, therefore, would have reduced still further the column, and divested it of a frank clear aspect when viewed at that distance. To obviate so untoward a contingency, the Persian sculptor modified the form, as the Greek often did in similar cases."[1]

(2) The shaft of the Mauryan column is monolithic whereas that of the Achæmenian column, whether at Persepolis, Susa or Pasargadæ, is composed of different segments or drums.[2]

(3) The stone columns of the Mauryan pillared hall were evidently without capitals, for no trace of any Mauryan capital was found by Dr. Spooner in the course of his excavations at Kumrahar, site No. 1, whereas all the columns of the pillared halls of Persepolis are decorated with more or less elaborate capitals.

One very curious architectural relic of the Mauryan period is the arch stone or voussoir in the Indian Museum with all the four rough sides indented for fitting into and supporting or being supported by similar other voussoirs (N. S. 3830). As the arch was not used by the Persians and the Greeks this type of arch must be attributed to the inventiveness of the Indian architects.

If from the pillared hall of Pataliputra we turn to the edict-bearing columns of Aśoka, the problem appears no less complex. The so-called Persepolitan bell-shaped capital does seldom figure as a part of the capital of the columns of Persepolis and Susa but serves as their base.[3] The transfer of the bell from the base to the top of the column is a Mauryan adaptation. There is also a considerable difference in the shape of the Mauryan and the Persian bell. The upper part of the Indian bell bulges much more than the upper part of the Persepolitan bell and has a diameter nearly equal to that of the diameter of its lower end or the mouth, whereas the bell of Susa and Persepolis has the normal appearance. But what unmistakably indicates that the Persepolitan bell is the proto-type of the Indian bell is the identical stylistic arrangement of the double row of pendent leaves that decorate both. The Indian bell lacks the decoration which appears round the upper part of the Persepolitan bell.

[1] Per. & Chip., p. 87. [2] *Ibid.* p. 69.

[3] Per. & Chip., pp. 89-97 ; Sarre, Plate 36. For the bull capital of the Persepolitan column see Sarre, Plate 7.

But the torus that surmounts the Persepolitan bell reappears on the Indian bell. The cable moulding on the bell of the Rampurva bull capital is an Indian variation. The round abacus on the Mauryan capital is an Indian invention. The row of geese or other animals on the Mauryan abacus reminds one more of the series of animals on Assyrian bronze bowls[1] than anything Persian. The floral decorations, the acanthus and the plume of palm leaves recall Assyrian and Greek forms.

The crowning members of the columns of Aśoka are of two types; the edict-bearing columns of Sarnath and Sāñchī are crowned by four semi-lions standing back to back; the other columns are surmounted by single animal figures, lion, bull or elephant. The crowning animal figures of most of the Persepolitan columns are two semi-bulls seated back to back with their fore-legs folded back; but in the eastern portico of the palace of Xerxes the semi-bulls are replaced by unicorns with lion's face and paws stretched out.[2] In the Patna Museum there is a fragment of a curious bull capital of Chunar sandstone with Mauryan polish which was found at a village called Salempur in the Hajipur sub-division of the Muzaffarpur District. The capital consists of two pairs of bulls seated back to back on a plain square abacus, with a square block above the animals, which is adorned with the honey-suckle ornament.[3]

The Persepolitan pillars were intended to support superstructures of buildings and their capital is only a decorative feature. But the extant Mauryan pillars are isolated self-contained monuments and their capitals must have been intended to serve some utilitarian purpose as well. The magnificent capital of the Sarnath pillar supported a Wheel of Law. It may be asked, what other purpose did the single animal figures crowning the Mauryan columns serve than decorating the shafts? Of the existing edict-bearing columns of Aśoka of this type the lion capital of the column at Lauriya-Nandangarh is still in its place,[4] and the lion capital of the Rampurva pillar is in the Indian Museum (6298-6299, Plate 3). Of others the capital is lost. We know three pillars without inscription that may be assigned to the Mauryan period on the ground of style and technique. The crowning animal figures on two of these pillars are extant. They are :—

(1) The Rampurva pillar with bull capital. The crowning bull with the abacus and the bell is now in the Indian Museum (6297, Plate 4).

(2) Pillar *in situ* with lion capital near the village of Kolhua, 2 miles to the north-west of Basarh, and 1 mile to the south-east of the village of Bakhra, in the Muzaffarpur District, Behar (Plate 5).[5]

(3) The pillar at Kosam in the Allahabad District, U. P., the site of ancient Kauśāmbī (the capital of the Vatsa kingdom) which has recently been set up by the Archæological Department.[6] The capital of this pillar has not yet been recovered.

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[1] Jastrow, p. 414, Pl. LXX.
[2] Per. & Chip., p. 90.
[3] A. R., A. S. I., E. C., 1918-19, p. 45, Plate.
[4] A. S. I., A. R., 1904-05, Plate; V. A. Smith's *Asoka*, Frontispiece; H. F. A. I. C., Plate II.
[5] C. R. Vol. XVI, pp 12-13: H. F. A. I. C., p. 62, Fig. 29; A. S. I. A. R., 1922-23, p. 30, Plate XV(c).
[6] A. S. I. A. R., 1923-24, Plate XV(b).

In the Rupnath and Sahasram rock inscriptions considered by most scholars as the earliest of inscriptions issued by Aśoka the king says, "And cause ye this matter to be engraved on rocks where an occasion presents itself. And (wherever) there are stone pillars here, it must be caused to be engraved on stone pillars." At the end of the seventh pillar edict which is the last known inscription of Aśoka the same order is repeated, "This rescript on Dharma must be engraved there, where either stone pillars or stone slabs are (available)." In this connection it should also be borne in mind that in the first part of the seventh pillar-edict Aśoka states, "I have set up pillars of Dharma." Bühler and Hultzsch (p. 154 note 1) note in this sentence a reference to the pillars (Delhi-Mirath, Allahabad, Lauriya-Araraj, Lauriya-Nandangarh, Rampurva) that bear the first six edicts. To this list should be added the Delhi-Topra, Sāñchī and Sarnath pillars. But as Aśoka twice orders that his rescripts should be engraved on stone pillars then in existence, some at least of the pillars that bear his edicts must have been in existence before Aśoka proposed to engrave edicts on them, and some of these may even be pre-Aśokan, while others are his own Dharmastambhas, that is to say, pillars erected by himself for engraving edicts of Dharma on them. The dedicatory inscriptions on the Rummindei and Nigali Sagar pillars tell us that these were caused to be set up by King Priyadarśin. The style of these two pillars may enable us to determine which among the edict-bearing pillars are Aśoka's own Dharma-stambhas and which were in existence before. If the passages from the edicts quoted above create a doubt as to whether all the edict-bearing pillars were set up by Aśoka himself, they may further lead to the assumption that some of the pillars of the Aśokan type that bear no edicts are pre-Aśokan. The heavy and ungainly shape of the shaft of the Kolhua (Bakhra) pillar as compared to that of the others together with the plain square abacus on its bell capital on which the lion sits indicates that it belongs to an earlier stage of development of the Mauryan art than the edict-bearing pillars of Aśoka (Plate 5). I venture to assign the Kolhua pillar to the early part of the reign of Bindusāra, and the Rampurva pillar with the bull capital the carving (honey suckle) on the abacus of which is rather stiff and of which the crowning bull "fails to harmonise with the capital on which it stands" to the later part of the reign of the same king. As we have already seen, Bindusāra-Amitraghāta wrote to Antiochus I (Soter), son and successor of Seleucus, for sweet wine, dried figs and a sophist. Bindusāra's fondness for things Greek might have led him to import sculptors from the Seleucid kingdom who introduced Perso-Hellenistic elements in Mauryan art which was inaugurated by himself and which reached its perfection in the reign of Aśoka.

The existence of pillars crowned by animal figures before Aśoka turned them into Dharma pillars by engraving edicts on them indicates that such pillars were originally intended for some other purpose, evidently for worship. Such sacred or votive pillars crowned by a single animal figure, though not found in Persia, were once common, as ancient bas-reliefs show, in Babylonia and Assyria. These Chaldæan animal standards were the symbols of divine

beings. Thus a falcon on a pole engraved on a Babylonian boundary stone reproduced by Jastrow (Plate LXXII, Fig. 2) is the symbol of the goddess Pan. An Assyrian bas-relief of the time of Ashurnasirpal (885-860 B.C.) shows a *zaribah* each of the two front posts of which is crowned by a horned animal, a ram[1]. Posts surmounted by the symbol of the deity are often engraved on Babylonian seal cylinders[2]. The ancient Greeks knew of the cult of the sacred post with the law inscribed on it. "Plato (in *Krito*) describes a sacrifice of a bull that is said to have been offered in the sunken island of Atlantis, by which it has been conjectured that he meant Crete. The bull was led to a pillar or column on which the law and a curse were inscribed, and was slain against the top of the column over the writing[3]." Brahmanic mythology knows of the animal standards of three different gods; the Garuḍa-dhvaja or column crowned by the mythical bird Garuḍa dedicated to Vishṇu; the Vrishadhvaja or the column with the bull of Śiva; and Makara-dhvaja or the column with Makara or the crocodile of Kandarpa or Māra. The remnants of two inscribed Garuḍa-dhvaja and the crowning Makara of a Makara-dhvaja of the second century B.C. have been discovered at Besnagar, ancient Vidisa, in Central India[4]. Another class of capitals of the same epoch evidently crowning votive columns like the Garuḍa-dhvaja and the Makara-dhvaja are the Kalpadruma or wishing-tree from Besnagar in the Indian Museum (No. 1795, Plate 9) and two palm-leaf capitals, one found at Besnagar,[5] and the other at Pawaya[6], in the Gwalior State in Central India. The Rampurva pillar with the bull is probably a symbolic representation of Śiva. The bull and the Garuḍa that are the symbols of Śiva and Vishṇu respectively are also the carriers of these gods. The lion is the carrier of Durgā and the elephant Airāvata of Indra. It may, therefore, be assumed on the analogy of the bull and Garuḍa pillars that the pillar with the lion capital is the symbol of Durgā and the pillar with the elephant capital that of Indra or of Buddha who is said to have entered the womb of Māyā in the form of a white elephant. The elephant capital of the Mauryan pillar at Sankisa (Sāṁkāśya) is still in existence[7]. Below the thirteenth Girnar rock-edict, on the right side of the rock is engraved, "............the entirely white elephant bringing indeed happiness to the whole world"[8]. This must have been intended to serve as the label of the figure of an elephant that Aśoka caused to be carved and that has now disappeared. On the top of the Dhauli rock bearing the edicts the fore-part of an elephant, four feet high, has been hewn out of the solid rock and at the end of the sixth Dhauli rock-edict is engraved

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[1] Budge, *Assyrian Sculpture in the British Museum. Reign of Ashurnasirpal*, 885-860 B.C., London, 1914, Plate XVI, 1.

[2] *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol X, p. 92.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 95.

[4] M. A. S. I. No. 5, p. 164.

[5] C. R., Vol. X, p. 42, Plate XIV.

[6] A. S. I., A. R., 1915-16, p. 107, Plate LVII (*d*).

[7] C. R., Vol. I, p. 274; H. F. A. I. C., p. 60, Fig. 28.

[8] Hultzsch, p. 26.

the word, *seto* "the white one", evidently referring to the figure of the elephant which is recognised as a representation of Buddha[1]. On the north face of the Kalsi rock bearing the edicts is drawn an elephant below which is the Brāhmī label, *gajatame*, "the best of elephants"[2]. A miniature published by Foucher in his *Iconographie Bouddhique* (p. 55) shows that the Radhia (Lauriya-Araraj) pillar bearing the edicts of Aśoka was once crowned by a Garuḍa, that is to say, it was a symbol of Vishṇu. On two corner pillars of the great ground railing of the Buddhist stūpa of Bharhut now in the Indian Museum are carved a male and a female figure riding horses and carrying Garuḍa standards[3]. As we have already seen, in his minor rock inscriptions Aśoka claims that gods unmingled with men before were made by him mingled with them. One of the most effective means adopted for this purpose must have been the erection of these magnificent pillars crowned by the symbols of the gods. The cult of the pillars crowned by such figures was evidently an element of the primitive religion of Eastern India. It was probably an offshoot of the tree cult, of the cult of the tree like the palm tree, and pillars with palm-leaf capitals referred to above, though later in date, represent an earlier stage of the cult.

VII. LATER MAURYAN ART

If the design of the Mauryan column with its magnificent capital is mainly Indian, two features in its execution, the perfect realism of the animal figures and the high polish, indicate the collaboration of foreign (Perso-Greek) artists[4]. But there is another class of figure sculptures including human figures that lack the realism but possess the high Mauryan polish. Nine such sculptures are known to me. Five of these, namely, the two Patna statues (P. 1, P. 2, Plates 6 and 7), the two Griffins (5582 and 5583) from the site of Pataliputra, and the hood of Nāga heads from Rajgir are in the Indian Museum; while four others comprising the Didarganj female image and three fragments of capitals are in the Patna Museum. I shall begin with the latter group.

In the Patna Museum there is a fragment of the head of a lion with Mauryan polish which was found at a village named Masarh 6 miles to the west-south-west of Arrah in Bihar with a fragment of the abacus of the capital of a pillar. A comparison of the Masarh fragments with the corresponding parts of an Aśokan capital at once brings to light the striking disparity of the workmanship. The modelling of the mouth of the Masarh lion is very conventional and the mane is disposed in schematic curls simply scratched on the surface of the neck and not cut in relief. The acanthus on the Masarh fragment of the abacus is also crude and the hind legs of the lion still preserved on it are stiff. The bull of the fragment of the capital from Salempur referred to above (p. 30) is equally stiff and the acanthus above the bull is stylised like

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[1] Hultzsch, p. 93, note 1.
[2] Hultzsch, p. 50, and plate
[3] Cunningham, *Stupa of Bharhut*, London, 1879, Plate XXXII, 5 and 6.
[4] C. H. I., I, p. 622; Sir John Marshall, *A Guide to Sanchi*, Calcutta, 1918, p. 9.

that of the Suṅga period[1]. Two Griffins in the Indian Museum (Nos. 5582 and 5583) recall the Assyrian and the Persian representations of the monster (Plate V). The Assyrian type is represented by the fearful monster Tiamat engaged in fighting with the god Marduk[2]. The Persian (Achæmenian) Griffin is a good deal softened down[3]. Our Mauryan Griffin resembles the Persian monster in expression, but is far inferior in execution. The horns, the fore-legs and the wings are crude. The perfectly round lower part of the body that does not disclose any strain of the muscles is in striking contrast with the savage mien and the posture of the forelegs evidently intended to suggest readiness to fall upon the prey.

In the three extant human figures in the round with Mauryan polish we notice a mixture of the realistic and conventional styles. About the Patna statues in the Indian Museum Sir John Marshall writes, "Thus, the two statues from Patna in the Calcutta Museum are akin in many respects to the Parkham image, but exihibit a nearer approach to plurifaciality in the moulding of the torso[4]". The manner in which the Patna statues (Plate IV) wear the loin cloth (*dhoti*) is remarkable. The Indian mode of wearing the *dhoti* is, after covering the lower half of the body with one layer one end of the piece is passed between both the legs and fastened on the back. The end of the *dhoti* thus fastened on the back is known as *kāchhā* (Sanskrit, *kachchha*). The other end is allowed to hang in front either lengthwise or breadthwise disposed as a frill and is known as *kochā*. The *dhoti* worn by each of the Patna statues is without *kāchhā* and the frill in front, and recalls the lower part of the Median costume worn by the king and his attendants in the bas-reliefs of Persepolis[5]. This sort of garment with the borders sewed is known as *luṅgi* in India. The Patna statues wear the *dhoti* disposed nearly in the same fashion as the costume of Darius and his attendants which reaches down to the ankle on the back and leaves the legs exposed in front. It may be noted that in the figure of the king on the rock cut tombs at Naksh-i-Rustam and in the archers in the well known archers frieze of Susa (Sarre, Plates 32-35 and 38) the legs are exposed in front to a much less extent. The exceptional manner in which the *dhoti* is worn by the Patna statues more resembling the lower part of the Median costume than anything Indian seems to me to disclose Persian influence. But however patent the Persian influence in the drappery of the Patna statues may be, and however well executed the torso and the arms, the stiffness and the awkwardness of the lower half of the body of both indicates the existence of a backward indigenous art side by side with an exotic advanced art.

The disparity in the execution of the different parts of the same piece is perhaps still more evident in the Didarganj female image with Mauryan polish

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[1] A. R., A. S. I. E. C., 1818-19, Plate .

[2] Jastrow, Plate XXXVIII, Fig. I; *Assyrian Sculptures in the British Museum, Reign of Ashurnasirpal*, Plate XXXVII.

[3] Sarre, Plates 16 and 14.

[4] C. H. I., I, p. 622.

[5] King, Plate I; Sarre, Plates 3, 16, 17; Dalton, p. XXXII.

now in the Patna Museum. Dr. Spooner has very carefully described this image and analysed its characteristics in an article published in the Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society (Vol. V, 1919, pp. 107-113). "In point of modelling," observes Dr. Spooner, "the statue is in some ways fairly paradoxical and partakes of the characteristics of both classes of early work in India, the definitely indigenous and the supposedly exotic." Further on he suggests, "A possible explanation of the paradox is that we are dealing with the work of an artist of the primitive school represented by the Parkham image, working under the tutelage of a Mauryan master who added certain touches in the finishing or even modelled certain parts (*e.g.* the head) himself."

The circumstances under which this paradoxical type of art was produced in Magadha appear to be as follows. As stated above, the higher religion of India, the religion of the Vedas and the Upanishads, did not favour the growth either of architecture or sculpture. But the primitive religion of Eastern India, the tree (Chaitya) worship, the stūpa worship, and the worship of the animal standards of gods and goddesses must have had for its handmaid a primitive decorative art which used wood as its material. Bindusāra and Aśoka imported artists from the neighbouring Seleucid kingdom to build stone monuments. With the aid of these artists was created the Mauryan art which is perhaps best described in the words that Darmesteter uses in connection with the Achæmenian art and its creator Darius the Great with only a few changes :—"It was a composite art, sprung from a royal whim but which kneaded into a powerful unity the artistic forms of India, Assyria and Persia; it was the caprice of an almighty dilettante gifted with a grand taste."[1] The foreign artists must have trained a considerable number of young Indian artizans at Pataliputra, Sarnath and other centres, and when the former were dead or gone, the latter would naturally be employed by the successor of Aśoka or others of the same generation, and the indigenous primitive art would assert itself in their work through the veneer of Perso-Hellenistic polish and finish. The paradoxical types discussed above, the griffins, the Patna statues in the Indian Museum, the Didarganj female statue and the fragments of capitals in the Patna Museum are the works of such Indian, or strictly speaking, Magadhan artists who received their early training under foreign masters of the Aśokan school and executed these works in the reign of his successor. Who was this successor of Aśoka?

In the Nagarjuni hills near the Barabar hills where Aśoka caused two caves to be excavated for the Ājīvika monks there are three caves hewn out of granite rock and the interior polished in the Aśokan fashion. The dedicatory Brāhmī inscriptions of these caves tell us that they were caused to be excavated by Devānāṁpriya Dasalatha (Daśaratha) immediately after his coronation for the Ājīvika monks. In the list of Mauryan kings in the Vishṇu and the Matsya Purāṇas Daśaratha is named as the grandson of Aśoka. Acccording to the Vishṇupurāṇa Aśoka's son Suyaśas reigned for eight years and was succeeded by his son Daśaratha. In the Vāyu and the Brahmāṇḍa Purānas

[1] Per. and Chip., p. 497; Dalton, p. xliii.

it is said that Aśoka was succeeded by his son Kuṇāla who reigned for eight years[1]. The name of Daśaratha does not occur in these two Purāṇas. In the Jaina and the Buddhist texts the grandson of Aśoka who succeeded him is called Samprati. The story of Samprati is thus told in the Sthavirāvali-charita (Canto IX) of Hemachandra[2]. Aśoka had sent his son and heir-presumptive Kuṇāla to Ujjayini (Ujjain) for training. When Kuṇāla was eight years old the king wrote to his tutors that the prince should begin his studies and used the Prakrit word *adhiyau* for the purpose. A step-mother of Kuṇāla who wanted to secure the succession for her own son saw the letter and without the king's knowledge put a dot over the first letter (*a*) of the word turning it into *aṁdhiyau*, 'blind him.' The king sealed and despatched the letter without re-reading it. When the letter reached Ujjayini and the prince read it, he readily put out his own eyes with hot iron. Aśoka was deeply sorry to hear it; but as Kuṇāla's blindness definitely disqualified him for succession to the throne, he was assigned a village for his maintenance and the son of his wicked step-mother was made the viceroy of Ujjain in his stead. In course of time Kuṇāla's wife Sarachchharī gave birth to a son. Kuṇāla determined to secure the succession for his son and disguised as a minstrel proceeded to Pataliputra. Aśoka, hearing of the skill of the blind minstrel, invited him to the palace and sat behind a screen to hear his song. Kuṇāla sang :—

prapautras-Chandraguptasya
Bindusārasya naptṛikaḥ I
esho'-śokaśriyaḥ sūnur-
andho mārgati kākinīm II

"This great-grandson of Chandragupta, grandson of Bindusāra, and son of Aśokaśrī who is blind seeks his *kākinī* (courie)."

The king asked the minstrel what was the name of this son. The minstrel replied, "I am your son Kuṇāla who blinded himself on seeing your written order." The king rushed out of the screen and recognising his son began to shed tears. He then said, "I am pleased with you, darling; what should I give you." The prince replied, "I beg *kākinī*, O lord." When Aśoka enquired of his ministers what was that, they said that for sons of kings *kākinī* denotes kingdom. Aśoka asked Kuṇāla, as he was blind what would he do with the kingdom. The prince replied that he wanted the kingdom for his son. King Aśoka asked, "When was a son born to you." "Just now (*samprati*)", replied Kuṇāla folding his hands. Aśoka named the child Samprati and installed him as his heir-apparent (IX, 40-52). The same story is told in the Sanskrit Buddhist text Divyāvadāna (pp. 407-418) with considerable variations. In this version the step-mother of Kuṇāla who caused him to be blinded was Tishyarakshitā, the chief queen of Aśoka. Kuṇāla is said to have offended her by contemptuously rejecting her improper request. Kuṇāla was the viceroy, not of Ujjain, but of Taxila (Takshaśilā). Once Tishya-rakshitā persuaded

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[1] Pargiter, *The Purāṇa text of the Dynasties of the Kali Age*, Oxford, 1913, pp. 27-28.

[2] *Shavirāvalicharita or Parisishtaparvan* by Hemachandra, edited by H. Jacobi, Bibliotheca Indica, Calcutta, 1891.

Aśoka to confer on her all powers for a week and issued a false letter addressed to the citizens of Taxila in the name of the king ordering them to pluck out the eyes of the prince. The blind prince with his consort Kāñchanamālā came to Pataliputra and took shelter in the royal stable. There, one morning he was singing to the accompaniment of the *vinā*. Aśoka recognised the voice and summoned the prince to his presence. Father and son were reunited and the wicked Tishyarakshitā was burnt alive. In the Kuṇālāvadāna (Divyāvadāna, XXVII) no reference is made to the birth of Samprati. But in another tale (XXIX) we are told that Kuṇāla's son Sampadi was installed as heir-apparent by Aśoka and ultimately ascended the throne after the demise of that king. Sampadi is the Prakrit form of Samprati. The points of difference between the Jaina and the Buddhist versions of the story indicate that they are derived, not from a common source, but from two independent sources. The common basis of these two independent currents of tradition *viz.* that Aśoka was succeeded by his gradson Samprati, cannot be treated lightly. The grandson of Aśoka who sat on the Mauryan throne is named Daśaratha in two of the Purāṇas. This name, as it occurs in the Nagarjuni cave inscriptions with the epithet Devānaṁpriya, may, like Priyadarśin, be a title and not a proper name. Waddell suggested the indentification of Daśaratha with Samprati long ago[1]. One other element in the Jaina story also supports this identification. Daśaratha figures as a builder and the patron of a contemporary order of monks, the Ājīvikas, in the Nagarjuni cave inscriptions. It is said about Samprati in the Sthavirāvalicharita that he covered Bhārata-kshetra (India) with Jaina shrines (XI, 65) and sent Jaina monks to preach the religion among the Andhras and the Drāmilas (XI, 89-102). There is nothing particularly Jaina about the later Mauryan sculptures to justify their direct connection with Samprati with the exception of the hood of seven serpent heads from Rajgir (N. S. 3) which may be the cognizance of the twenty-third Jina or Tirthaṅkara Pārśvanatha. Though Jaina tradition recognises Samprati as the earliest consecrator of Jina images, it is very doubtful whether the Jainas had begun to make such images so early, so long before the Buddhists adopted the usage of making images of Buddha. All the available sculptures of the later Mauryan period, including the figure sculptures, were evidently intended for decorative purposes. The two male statues from Patna in the Indian Museum, one of which shows a *chauri* (fly-whisk) (Plate 6), and the *chauri*-bearing Didarganj female statue in the Patna Museum probably represent attendant Yaksha and Yakshī or some other class of superhuman beings attached to chaitya trees or stūpas. This conclusion is suggested by the disposition of the images of Yakshas, Nāgas and Devatās on the railing of the stūpa of Bharhut and on the old railing round the Bodhi tree at Bodh-Gaya.

About 250 B.C., while Aśoka was busy in pushing abroad his conquest through Dharma, Diodotus, Satrap or Governor of Bactria (Northern Afghanistan) and Sogdiana (Bukhara) on behalf of Antiochus II, assumed independence. The connection with the Seleucid king was probably completely severed by his son

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[1] Waddell, p. 62.

Diodotus II. Antiochus II (B.C. 261-246) and his two immediate successors, Seleucus II (B. C. 246-226) and Seleucus III (B.C. 226-223) were too pre-occupied with wars in the west to make any serious attempt to recover Bactria. Diodotus II was overthrown by Euthydemus. The Seleucid king Antiochus III (B. C. 222-187) invaded Bactria about 208 B.C. and forced Euthydemus to sue for peace. Polybius writes :—

"Antiochus (the Great) received the young prince (Demetrius, son of Euthydemus) and judging from his appearance, conversation, and the dignity of his manners that he was worthy of royal power, he (Antiochus) first promised to give one of his own daughters and secondly conceded the royal title to his father. And having on the other points caused a written treaty to be drawn up, and terms of the treaty to be confirmed on oath, he marched away after liberally provisioning his troops, accepting the elephants belonging to Euthydemus. He crossed the Caucasus (Hindu Kush) and descended into India; *renewed his friendship with Sophagasenus, the king of the Indians;* and having once more provisioned his troops, set out again personally with his army, leaving to Androsthenes of Cyzicus the duty of taking home the treasure which the king had agreed to hand over to him."[1]

According to Dr. F. W. Thomas the name of Sophagasenus or Subhagasena indicates that he was of the line of Virasena, a great-grandson of Aśoka, who is represented as ruling in Gandhara by the Tibetan historian Taranath. The Divyāvadāna (p. 433) contains the following list of the successors of Aśoka which may be compared with the Vishṇu Purāṇa list :—

Divyāvādāna.	*Vishṇu Purāṇa.*
Sampadi	Daśaratha
Vṛihaspati	Saṅgata
Vṛishasena	Sālisuka
Pushyadharman	Somasarman
Pushyamitra	Śatadhavan
	Bṛihadratha

In the Divyāvadāna, Pushyamitra, named as the last of the Mauryas, is evidently confounded with Bṛihadratha, the last Maurya king according to the Purāṇas and Bāṇa's Harshacharita, who was put to death by Senāpati Pushyamitra. There is no other way of reconciling the Divyāvadāna and the Paurāṇic lists unless we assume that after Samprati-Daśaratha there were two different lines of Maurya kings, one of which held sway in the east and the other in the north-west. Subhagasena was probably a Maurya prince related to Vṛishasena who ruled the north-western frontier province of the empire either independently or as viceroy when Antiochus III crossed the Hindu-Kush. The statement of the historian Polybius that Antiochus then "renewed his friendship with Sophagasenus" indicates that this descent was not a hostile act, but must have been undertaken either on the invitation or with the permission of the latter who presented elephants and treasures ostensibly to

[1] McCrindle, *Ancient India*, p. 209.

strengthen the old friendship, but probably really to secure the support of the powerful Seleucid king against his Maurya rivals.

Early in the second century B.C., when Antiochus III became involved in war with the Roman Empire in Asia Minor which was to prove his ruin, Euthydemus of Bactria probably expanded his dominion at the expense of Sophagasenus by annexing southern Afghanistan. Euthydemus died about 190 B.C. and his son and successor Demetrius known as "the King of India" conquered the Indus valley. In the east, about 184 B.C., Senāpati (commander-in-chief) Pushyamitra put an end to the Maurya dynasty by assasinating his master Bṛihadratha.

VIII. CATALOGUE

(*a*) Mauryan Sculptures in the Entrance Hall

N.S. 3596. As a visitor sets foot in the main entrance hall of the Indian Museum he finds in the middle bay of the first row of bays, to his right hand, a plaster cast of the famous lion capital (Plate II*a*) of the inscribed pillar of Aśoka at Sarnath near Benares. The capital with the stump and fragments of a highly polished monolithic column and a few fragments of a sacred wheel, Dharmachakra, that once surmounted the capital, was excavated by Mr. F. O. Oertel of the Public Works Department, United Provinces, in the working season of 1904-5[1]. The capital, broken across in the original just above the bell, measures 7′ feet in height. It is in three parts. At the top four magnificent lions stand back to back on a drum or abacus with a lion, an elephant, a bull and a horse placed between four wheels. Below the drum is a fine Persepolitan bell-shaped member. Sir John Marshall writes about this capital :—

"The Sarnath capital, though by no means a masterpiece, is the product of the most developed art of which the world was cognisant in the third century B.C.—the handiwork of one who had generations of artistic effort and experience behind him. In the masterful strength of the crowning lions, with their swelling veins and tense muscular development, and in the spirited realism of the reliefs below, there is no trace whatever of the limitations of primitive art. So far as naturalism was his aim, the sculptor modelled his figures direct from nature, and has delineated their forms with bold, faithful touch ; but he has done more than this : he has consciously and of set purpose infused a tectonic conventional spirit into the four lions, so as to bring them into harmony with the architectural character of the monument, and in the case of the horse on the abacus he has availed himself of a type well known and approved in western art. Equally mature is the technique of his relief work. In early Indian as in early Greek sculpture, it was the practice, as we shall presently see, to compress the relief between two fixed planes, the original front plane of the slab and the plane of the background. In the reliefs of the Sarnath capital there is no trace whatever of this process ; each and every

[1] F. O. Oertel, "Excavations at Sarnath," A.S.I., A.R., 1904-05, p. 69, Plate XX.

part of the animal is modelled according to its actual depth without reference to any ideal front plane, with the result that it presents the appearance almost of a figure in the round which has been cut in half and then applied to the background of the abacus."[1]

6298-6299. Within the same bay of the Entrance Hall facing the cast of the Sarnath capital, is installed the original lion capital (Plate II*b*) of the Rampurva pillar bearing the first six pillar-edicts of Aśoka. Mr. Garrick disconnected the lower part of this capital consisting of the bell and the abacus from the shaft and Pandit (now Rai Bahadur) Daya Ram Sahni discovered the crowning figure, a single lion *sejant*, 7 feet below the ground level on brick debris some four feet to the west of the top of the column.[2] Both parts of the capital have been joined and the crowning lion placed on the abacus. "It is a single lion *sejant* much like the lions on the Laurīya Nandangarh and Basarh pillars. The upper jaw is broken, but the rest of the sculpture is singularly well preserved, retaining its polish as fresh as when it was first set up. The muscle and thews of the beast are vigorously modelled, and, though conventionalized in certain particulars, it is endowed with a vitality and strength which rank it among the finest sculptures of the Mauryan period."[3] The abacus is adorned by a row of geese, or rather two rows of geese moving in opposite directions from the point of departure below the tail of the lion and meeting below the fore paws. The entire capital measures 7 feet 5 inches in height.

2676. Just behind the original lion capital from Rampurva is fixed in the wall a copper bolt of cylindrical shape bulging in the middle, 2 feet $\frac{7}{8}$th of an inch in length. At one end the circumference is 11 inches, at the other end $10\frac{3}{4}$ inches (diameter $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches) and at the middle 1 foot $1\frac{3}{8}$th inches. This bolt belonged to the Asokan column at Rampurva and was presented to the Indian Museum by Mr. H. B. W. Garrick of the Archæological Survey of India in 1888. When this Rampurva column bearing edicts of Aśoka was discovered by Mr. Carlleyle of the Archæological Survey of India in 1879 it was found buried in the ground in a slanting position showing only the lower part of the capital made up of the bell and the abacus. In 1881 Mr. Garrick visited Rampurva and disconnected the bell of the capital from the shaft in order to take a photograph of it.[4] He found this copper bolt connecting the capital with the shaft. There are certain dotted symbols on the surface some of which, a stūpa or mountain with a crescent on the top, a cross and a very crude representation of the human form are recognisable.

2697. To the north of the original lion capital from Rampurva in the same bay is exhibited the original bull capital (Plate III*a*) 6 feet 9 inches in height, of another monolithic Mauryan pillar found at a distance of some 300 yards to the south of the edict-bearing pillar with the lion capital. Messrs. Carlleyle and Garrick had noticed the stump of this second column protruding a few

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[1] Sir John Marshall, "The Monuments of Ancient India," C.H.I., I, p. 620; H.F.A.I.C., p. 60, Plate XIII.

[2] Daya Ram Sahni, "Excavations at Rampurwa," A.S.I., A.R., 1907-08, p. 184 and Plates LXV and LXVI.

[3] Sir John Marshall, "Archæological Exploration in India," 1907-08, J.R.A.S., 1908, p. 1086.

[4] A.R.A.S., Bengal Circle, 1901-1902, p. 5.

feet above the ground. The bull capital and the entire column in three pieces were dug out by Rai Bahadur Daya Ram Sahni in the same year as the lion capital. The abacus of this bull capital is decorated with honey-suckle instead of a row of geese. "The bull is, however, by no means so well executed as the lion, and fails to harmonise with the capital on which it stands. Nevertheless, it has considerable value, as being the first portrayal of a bull in the round which has come down to us from the Mauryan period. I am inclined to regard this pillar as somewhat later in date than the lion pillar to the north."[1] The part of the stump of the column where we might expect an inscription is mutilated. It was found *in situ* on a brick plinth at the level of the remains of the brick plinth of the edict-bearing pillar. "This plinth is an irregularly shaped structure, measuring 11½′ from east to west and 9′ from north to south, built, in the southern half, of bricks of the same size as those found around the other pillar but of somewhat smaller ones in the other half."[2] The partial use of bricks of smaller size in building the plinth of the pillar with the bull capital indicates that it was not erected simultaneously with the edict-bearing pillar. The capital measures 6 feet 8 inches in height.

P. 1. In the middle bay of the third row of bays in the Entrance Hall facing north is a reddish-grey sandstone male figure in the round (Plate IV *a* & *b*) which was originally dug out by Buchanan from a field in the south side of the Patna city about 1812[3] and was presented to the Asiatic Society of Bengal by Mr. J. Tytler in 1821. The head and the fore arms are lost and the statue now measures 5 feet 5 inches in height. The pedestal is 5 inches in height. Round the neck is a heavy necklace of cord pattern made up of many strings of beads. On the right shoulder rests a chauri of which the handle is lost. The armlet has the shape of a snake coiling round the arm with a body bearing slanting rows of beads carved on it. A long scarf with conventional straight folds passes obliquely over the left shoulder and the upper part of the body, and both of its ends hang on the back. Just behind the shoulder on the scarf is an inscription in characters used in the first century A.D. that may be read thus :—

Yakh[*o*] *sa*(?) *vaṭanaṁdī*

The figure wears a *dhoti* or loin cloth, not in the usual fashion covering part of the lower half of the body with one end drawn between the legs and fastened on the back and the other end hanging in front as a frill, but as a *luṅgi* (tunic) which is tied round the loins by a girdle and hangs down loosely and touches the ground on the back and the borders of which overlap in front leaving the feet and ankles exposed. The free end of this cloth instead of being arranged in a frill in front is gathered and made to hang behind the left thigh with a loop. The folds of the loin cloth are marked by double lines. The upper half of the body still bears Mauryan polish.

[1] Sir John Marshall, J. R. A. S., 1908, p. 1088.

[2] Daya Ram Sahni, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

[3] J.B.O.R.S., Vol. V, p. 103; *Ibid*, Vol. VIII, p. 356.

P. 2. Beside P.1 is installed another male figure in the round of the same material and of the same type as P. 1 (Plate IV *c* & *d*). It was discovered in 1811-12 by Dr. Buchanan Hamilton in the Ganges opposite to the suburbs above the Patna city "lying by the water's edge when the river was at the lowest." "Dr. Buchanan was told by the labourers whom he employed to bring the image to his house that it had been taken from a field on the south side of the suburbs of the city."[1] This image like P. 1 was presented to the Asiatic Society of Bengal by Mr. J. Tytler in 1821. Though the head of this figure is preserved to us in its place, the ears are lost and the eyes, nose and mouth are damaged. It also probably bore a fly-whisk on the right shoulder which is lost along with the right arm. The left fore arm with the lower half of the upper arm, and both the legs are also lost. The necklace of this figure is of a different type from that of P.1. The scarf, the loin cloth and the girdle are arranged in the same manner as those of P.1. On the scarf behind the left shoulder is a short inscription in the same type of Brāhmī characters and may be read thus:—

Bhage Achachhanīvike

Like P. 1 the upper part of the body of P. 2 also bears Mauryan polish. The two statues resemble each other in so many respects that they may be safely recognised as the work of the same artist or the same group of artists. The radical difference between the arrangement of the drapery of these statues and that of the figures on the Śuṅga railings of Bharhut and Bodh-Gaya indicates that they must be assigned to a different epoch and the fine polish indicates that the epoch is in all probability the Mauryan epoch. The short straight hair on the head is carefully combed. The hideous short thick neck offers a contrast to the head and the torso, and particularly the latter which is modelled with care and invests the figure with an appearance of serene dignity. The clinging sheet of cloth that envelopes the lower half of the body is rendered with considerable skill on the back where through its thin texture the contours of the buttocks and the thighs are visible. But on the front the drapery almost completely hides the lower limbs and gives them an appearance of stiffness in both the statues. The modelling of the lower half of the body preserved in P. 1 is characterised by clumsiness and heaviness.

These two male chauri-bearers call to mind the Didarganj image of the female chauri-bearer which has been carefully described by the late Dr. Spooner.[2] The latter image also bears the Mauryan polish and the folds of its drapery are also marked by double lines. But the difference is no less striking. The rendering of the neck of the Didarganj image is naturalistic and graceful and its loin cloth has in front a hanging frill common in images of the Śuṅga period. The inscriptions on the scarf of the Patna Statues that must have been engraved at least a couple of centuries after the statues led Cunningham to recognise them as images of Yakshas; while Mr. K. P. Jayaswal

[1] J.B.O.R.S., Vol. V, p. 103; *Ibid*, Vol. VIII, p. 355.

[2] D. B. Spooner, "Didarganj Image now in the Patna Museum," J.B.O.R.S., Vol. V, 1919, pp. 107-113.

has recently found evidence in them to identify them as images of two kings of the Saisunaka dynasty of Magadha.[1]

S. 39. In the shelf on the side wall of the north bay of the third row of bays in the entrance hall is deposited "a block of sandstone measuring about 2 feet square above and below, but only 18 inches in height. It is hollowed out on its upper surface, into a cup-shaped cavity about 1 foot (13 inches) in diameter and with a depth of 10·50″. The surface of the stone is quite smooth........ The sides bulge somewhat, and are slightly convex."[2] This stone is believed to be the relic chamber of the main stūpa of Sarnath demolished in 1794 by Jagat Singh, the Dewan of Raja Chait Singh of Benares, for the purpose of obtaining bricks. "It was discovered at a depth of 27 feet, and contained a marble box which, according to Jonathan Duncan, held a few human bones, some decayed pearls, gold leaves and other jewels of no value." The marble box or casket was removed and presented to the Asiatic Society of Bengal from where it subsequently disappeared. The block of stone with the cavity wherein the casket was found was left in its original position by Jagat Singh. Cunningham, while engaged in his excavations at Sarnath in 1835, rediscovered it with the aid of an old man, who, as a boy, had assisted at Jagat Singh's excavations. Dr. Anderson found the block lying in the garden attached to the Asiatic Society's premises and removed it to the Indian Museum. The stūpa destroyed by Jagat Singh had a diameter of 110 feet and encased as its core a stūpa or Dharmarajika built by Aśoka with a diameter of 49 feet.[3] The relic casket found in the cup-shaped cavity of this block was probably deposited by Aśoka.

N.S. 3830. In the shelf on the side wall of the southern bay of the same row of bays is exhibited a granite arch stone or voussoir (measuring 2 feet 9 inches in length, 2 feet 1½ inches in breadth at the upper end and 11 inches at the lower end and 13 inches in thickness). It was discovered when the roots of an old tree were being dug out of the compound of the Muhammadan shrine (*Dargah*) near the site of Pataliputra. Mr. K. P. Jayaswal, M.A., Bar.-at-Law, Patna, acquired the stone from the Manager (Sajjadanashin) of the *Dargah* and lent it to the Indian Museum for exhibition in 1922. The upper convex and the lower concave faces of the stone bear Mauryan polish and on three

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[1] C.R., XV, pp. 1-3; Waddell, *Report*, p. 22; K. P. Jayaswal, "Statues of two Saisunaka Emperors," J.B.O.R.S., Vol. V, pp. 88-106. "Saisunaka Statues III," *Ibid*, 516-542; R. D. Banerji, "A note on the Statues of Saisunaka emperors in the Calcutta Museum," *Ibid*, pp. 210-215; L. D. Barnett, "Saisunaka Statues II," *Ibid*, pp. 513-516; B. C. Bhattacharya, "Saisunaka Statues," *Ibid*, pp. 402-404; V. A. Smith, "Saisunaka Statue I," *Ibid*, p. 512; Arun Sen, "Saisunaka Statues IV," *Ibid*, pp. 542-549; Haraprasad Sastri, "Saisunaga Statues," *Ibid*, pp. 552-563; Ramaprasad Chanda, "Inscriptions on two Patna Statues in the Indian Museum," *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XLVIII, 1919, pp. 25-28; R. C. Majumdar, "Alleged Saisunaga Statues," *Ibid*, pp. 29-32; O. C. Gangooly, "A note on Mr. Jayaswal's discovery of two Saisunaga Statues," *Modern Review*, October 1919, pp. 419-424; Ramaprasad Chanda, "Four Ancient Yaksha Statues," *Journal of the Department of Letters, University of Calcutta*, Vol. IV, pp. 47-84; A. K. Coomarswamy, *Catalogue of the Indian Collection in the Museum of Fine Arts*, Boston, (Boston, 1923), pt. II, p. 4.

[2] Anderson, p. 22.

[3] Daya Ram Sahni, *Guide to Sarnath*, 3rd edition, p. 18.

corners of the lower face are engraved three archaic Brāhmī letters, *ko, kau, chu(?)*, evidently mason's marks. The indentations on all the four rough sides of the stone indicate that it was originally intended to be placed in a suspended position and belonged to the arch of a *toraṇa* or gateway.[1] But the arch was not a free one consisting of wedge-shaped stones which hold together by lateral pressure, but of stones with indentations on sides that made them fit into and support one another in the suspended position.

(*b*) Mauryan Sculptures exhibited in the Bharhut Gallery

N.S. 3. On the eastern wall of the Bharhut Gallery near the southern corner is fixed a group of seven concentric serpent heads, 15½ inches in height and 18½ inches in breadth, with Mauryan polish. It was found at Rajgir in the Patna District in Bihar. The tenon below the group shows that it probably served as a hood of a Nāga image. Three of the serpent heads are more or less damaged.

5582. Below the serpent hood on a pedestal is fixed the sand-stone figure in the round of a winged monster or griffin (Plate V *a* & *b*) with the head and paws of a lion, the wings of a bird, and the horns of a ram (height 27 inches). The surface of the figure, where not damaged, bears high Mauryan polish. The upper part of the head and the hind legs are lost. It was recovered in the course of Dr. Waddell's excavations at the site of Pataliputra near Patna. Dr. Waddell writes, "The first spot at which I commenced excavations was at Kumrahar, where that ancient pillar carved in deep relief had been found, inside the courtyard of the owner of that village, Shaikh Akram-ul-Haq. This gentleman had obligingly presented to me, for Government, portions of a Buddhist railing and a few other sculptured stones which he or his ancestors had unearthed in digging wells or house foundations hereabout, and he at my request permitted his courtyard to be incised deeply in several directions. These trenches were carried down to over twelve feet by Mr. Mills, but besides the fact that they showed that the whole thickness of that stratum was composed of broken-bricks and plaster, which had frequently been dug over, they revealed no structural remains, except a winged griffin sculptured in white sandstone, 30 inches long. It may be noted that griffins, although met with in Assyrian sculpture, are also specially referred to by old Greek authors (Ktesias) in their account of ancient India."[2] The modelling of the body of the monster is graceful, rather too graceful for its fierce mien. The wings are disproportionately small and the forelegs and paws are rendered conventionally and remind one of wooden proto-type.

5583. Beside the above is fixed the figure of another monster of the same type with high Mauryan polish also unearthed by Dr. Waddell at the site of Pataliputra but not noted in his Report. The entire head, part of the right foreleg and the hind legs are lost and the fragment now measures 24 inches in height.

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[1] A.S.I., A.R., 1921-22, p. 102, Plate XXXVI *a* and *b* and Plate XLC.

[2] Waddell, pp. 28-29.

(c) Suṅga Sculptures in the round in the Entrance Hall

1795. In the middle bay of the front row of bays of the entrance hall is exhibited the Kalpa-druma or wish-fulfilling tree of grey sandstone (Plate V *c*) that must once have served as the capital of a pillar. It was discovered by Cunningham at Besnagar near Bhilsa in the Gwalior State in Central India[1], and presented to the Indian Museum by H. H. the Maharaja Sindhia in 1885. The sculpture shows a tree with the large leaves and small berries of the Ficus Indica or banian tree and long pendant roots falling around the trunk to the ground below. It stands on a cylindrical platform protected by a bamboo fence of basket-work pattern. Below the platform is the square abacus of the capital carved as a railing enclosure of the holy tree. The eight pendant roots make seven compartments round the trunk in which, beginning from the west, we have the following objects: (1) A bag filled probably with coins tied round the neck and suspended from a branch of the tree with a rope; a small Kalpadruma growing beside it. (2) A *śaṅkha* or conch shell filled with square-shaped coins standing on its pointed mouth; next to it a small Kalpadruma with a suspended bag full of coins beside it. (3) A full-blown lotus with square-shaped coins overflowing from it. (4) A suspended bag only. (5) A vase filled to overflowing with square-shaped coins. (6) A bag and a small Kalpadruma. (7) A vase filled to overflowing with square-shaped coins. According to the lexicographer Amarasiṁha Kalpa-vṛiksha or Kalpadruma is one of the five celestial trees (*deva-taravaḥ*), the other four being Mandāra, Pārijāta, Santāna and Harichandana. The *saṅkha* (conch shell) and Padma (lotus) found underneath our Kalpadruma are two of the nine precious objects (*nidhi*) of Kuvera; the seven other precious objects of the group are the Makara (crocodile), Kachchhapa (tortoise), Mukunda, Kunda, Nīla, Kharva and Mahāpadma. The gift of a Kalpadruma made of gold to one's Brāhman preceptor with elaborate rites is prescribed in the Purāṇas and the ceremony is named Kalpa-pādapa-mahādāna. Like the two Garuḍa pillars referred to above (p. 32) the pillar surmounted by our Kalpadruma was probably installed at Besnagar (ancient Vidisa) in the Śuṅga period and dedicated to some deity of Indra's heaven. The entire capital including the Kalpadruma measures 5 feet 6 inches in height.

1796-1797. In the middle bay of the third row of bays in the Entrance Hall, opposite to P. 2, is exhibited the famous Besnagar female statue (Plate VI *a* & *b*) which Cunningham found close by the Kalpadruma and which also was presented to the Indian Museum by H. H. the Maharaja Sindhia in 1885. Cunningham writes: "Close by this curious capital there is a colossal female statue 6 feet 7 inches in height. The figure was broken in two pieces, and half buried in the ground. The arms are unfortunately gone, and, as there is no trace of either of the hands resting on the figure, the action is extremely doubtful." Unfortunately the face of this statue is mutilated. Like the female figures on the pillars of the railing of Bharhut the head is covered with richly embroid-

[1] C. R., X, pp. 43-44.

ed ribbons. On the head of this statue two ribbons embroidered with two different patterns are entwined. "At the back two long broad plaits of hair hang down to the loins. In the ears are large massive earrings, like those of the Bharhut sculptures. There are several garlands and necklaces round the neck, the former hanging low down in front between the breasts." The lower half of the body is draped in two different *sāris* or sheets, the lower one reaching to the ankles and the upper one to the mid legs. The border of the upper sheet of cloth hangs down in front arranged in a beautiful frill made up of folds in relief, resembling the frill of the loin cloth of the Bharhut statues, the end of which reaches to the ground. The folds of the rest of the drapery are conventionally marked by single lines. The scarfs in stylised folds cross each other in front and on the back and pass over the shoulders. The figure wears round the waist rich jewellery. A ribbon or sash passes over this jewellery and is tied in front. There is no mark of Mauryan polish. This statue differs in all those points from the only other known archaic standing female statue in the round, the Didarganj statue with Mauryan polish now in the Patna Museum, in which it resembles the nearly life size female figures carved on the railing of Bharhut. The Didarganj statue has garlands of beads on the head instead of embroidered ribbons; its earrings are of a different type; the folds of its loin cloth or *sāri* are marked with double lines instead of single lines; and the frill hanging in front is also of a different and less elaborate type. If the Didarganj image may be assigned to the third century B.C. on account of its Mauryan polish, the Besnagar female statue should be assigned to a different epoch—to the Śuṅga period in the second century B.C. during the second half of which the railing round the stūpa of Bharhut was erected.[1]

N.S. 3791. Cast of the colossal male statue in the round (Plate VI *c* & *d*) found at Parkham in the Muttra District and now in the Mathura Museum of Archæology. It measures 8 feet 8 inches in height including the base (which is 6½ inches in height) and 2 feet 8 inches in width across the shoulders. The face of the statue is sadly mutilated and both the arms are lost. The figure stands on the right leg and the left knee is slightly bent. It wears heavy earrings that resemble those worn by the images on the railing of Bharhut. Like the latter it wears a torque and a necklace which consists of several strands held together by cross bands and hangs down to the middle of the chest. The necklace is provided with four pendent tassels on the back. A scarf is tied round the chest. The figure wears a loin cloth (*dhoti*) with an elaborate frill hanging in front. Though this frill resembles the frill of the loin cloth worn by the images on the railing of Bharhut (Plate VII *a*) in a general way, it more closely resembles the frill in front of the male figure on the Bodh-Gaya rail pillar (Plate VII *b*) in being forked, with one end hanging between the legs and the other falling below the left knee. The torque and the necklace worn by the Parkham statue also resemble those of the Bodh-Gaya image. A second sheet of cloth is worn behind by the Parkham statue over the loin cloth which falls

[1] H. F. A. I. C., p. 62, Plate XIV.

down to the ground. But it looks rather like a heavy wooden plank suspended behind than a piece of cloth. The loin cloth and the sheet hanging on the back are held to the loins by means of a girdle tied in a knot in front. The folds of the sheet hanging behind are marked conventionally by single lines as in the Besnagar female figure. Cunningham writes, "The statue is made of grey sandstone, and still retains many traces of having been highly polished."[1] No such traces are visible in the original. "It is impossible to decide" says Dr. Vogel, "what the position of the arms was. But on the left side of the image there is a break which seems to indicate that the left hand was placed on the hip. The right arm was evidently free from the body as on this side no break is visible." On the top of the pedestal of this image, on both sides of and between the feet is a partially mutilated inscription in Brāhmī characters of the second century B.C. which may be read thus:—

nibhada pugari[nā].........[ga]atha ....pi . Kuni[k]ātevāsinā Gomitakena katā.

The last portion of the inscription means, "Made by Gomitra, pupil of Kunika."[2]

Not only the form of the letters used in this inscription, but also the types of jewellery and the arrangement of the drapery show that this statue is a work of the Śuṅga period though its crude workmanship indicates that it marks an early stage of development of the Śuṅga art. In this connection reference may also be made to another sculpture of the same period, a seated female figure in a modern temple at Jhinga-ki-Nagra in the Muttra District which, as the inscription on the base between the feet tells us, was made by Nāka, another pupil probably of the same Kunika.[3]

(*d*) **Casts of the Inscriptions of Asoka**

A set of plaster casts of the inscriptions of Aśoka is exhibited in the southern upper gallery of the New Hall near the Coin Room. How these casts came to be taken is thus told in the Annual Report of the Trustees of the Indian Museum, 1894-95 :—

"In May 1894, the Trustees drew the attention of the Government of Bengal to the historical and philological importance of the Aśoka inscriptions scattered over India, and to the fact that no permanent memorial existed of them, while the originals are exposed to decay and injury. They also suggested that some arrangements should be made for obtaining fac-simile casts which could be exhibited in the Museum and thus be accessible to scholars for scientific investigation. The scheme was cordially taken up by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, who in October 1894 deputed Mr. A. E. Caddy to take plaster casts of the inscriptions," pp. 8-9.

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[1] C. R., Vol. XX, p. 40.

[2] For discussions relating to the identification of the image and the meaning of the inscription, see J. Ph. Vogel, *Catalogue of the Mathura Museum of Archæology*, Calcutta, 1910, p. 53, Plate XII; K. P. Jayaswal, "Another Saisunaka Statue (Circa 515 B.C.)," J.B.O.R.S., Vol. V, pp. 550-551; "The Statue of Ajatasatru Kunika and Discussion of the Origin of Brāhmi," J.B.O.R.S., Vol. VI, pp. 173-204.

[3] A.S.I., A.R., 1922-23, p. 165.

In 1896-97 a new gallery called Aśoka Court was completed by funds provided by the Bengal Government. It consisted of a long hall, 80′ × 22′, running along the east wall of the Art Gallery, and was designed for the purpose of containing Aśoka casts and inscriptions, the moulds and impressions of which the Museum owed to the liberality of Sir Charles Alfred Elliott, K.C.S.I., C.S., Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. The work of arranging the casts of the Aśoka inscriptions was completed by Dr. T. Bloch in the following year. After 9 years, in August 1905, the contents of the Aśoka Court were removed and stored away in order that the Court might be dismantled and the site cleared for the proposed extension of the Museum building. In 1923 these casts were taken out of the godowns and displayed in the southern upper gallery of the New Hall. The set of casts of the pillar-edicts has been completed by adding a cast of the seventh edict on the Delhi-Topra pillar.

Postscript.

The Persepolitan bell occurs not only at the base (p. 29) but also as the lowest part of some of the pillars at Persepolis (Sarree and Herzfeld, *Iranische Felsreliefs*, Tafels XV-XVII).

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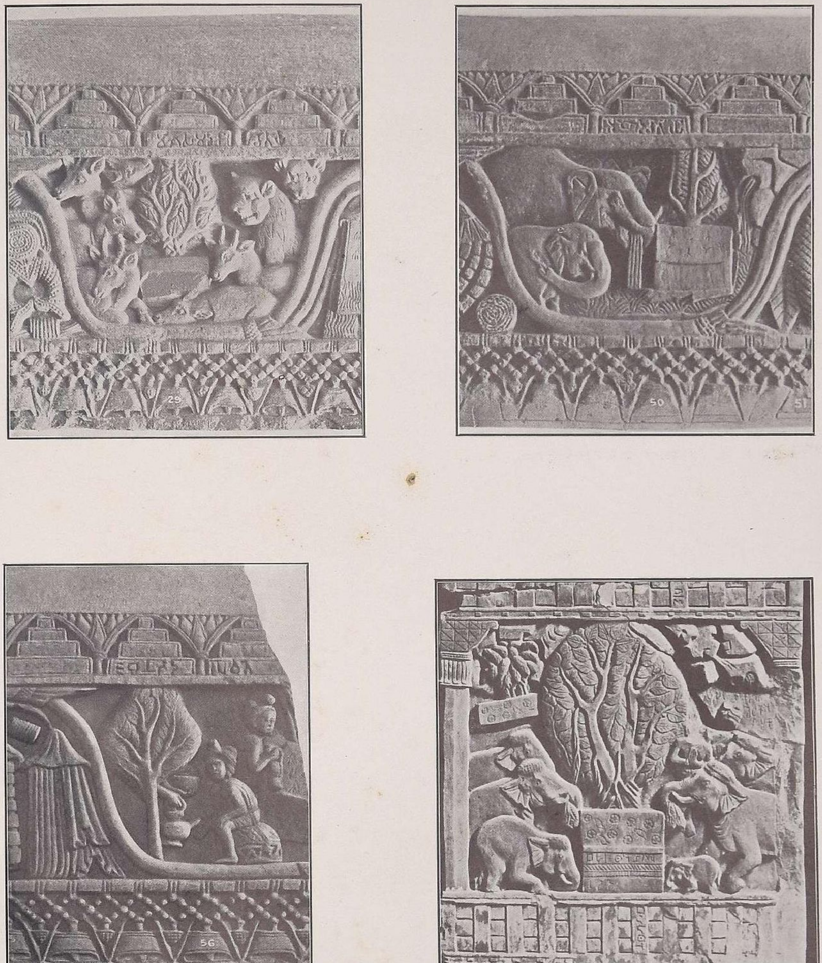
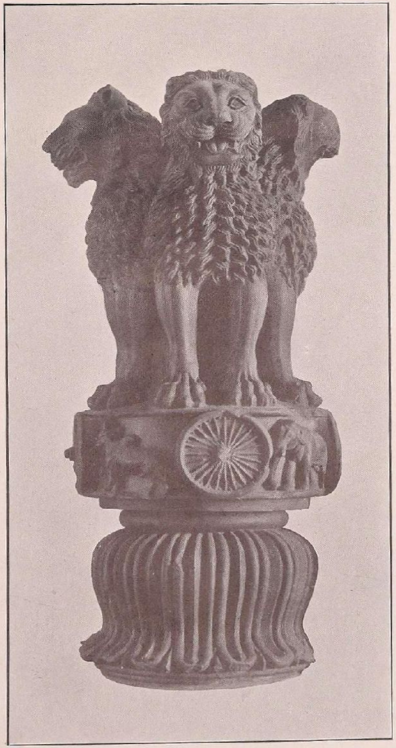
THE BEGINNINGS OF ART IN EASTERN INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SCULPTURES IN THE INDIAN MUSEUM, CALCUTTA.



BAS-RELIEFS OF BHARHUT ILLUSTRATING CHAITYA TREE WORSHIP.

Photo.-engraved & printed at the Offices of the Survey of India, Calcutta, 1927.

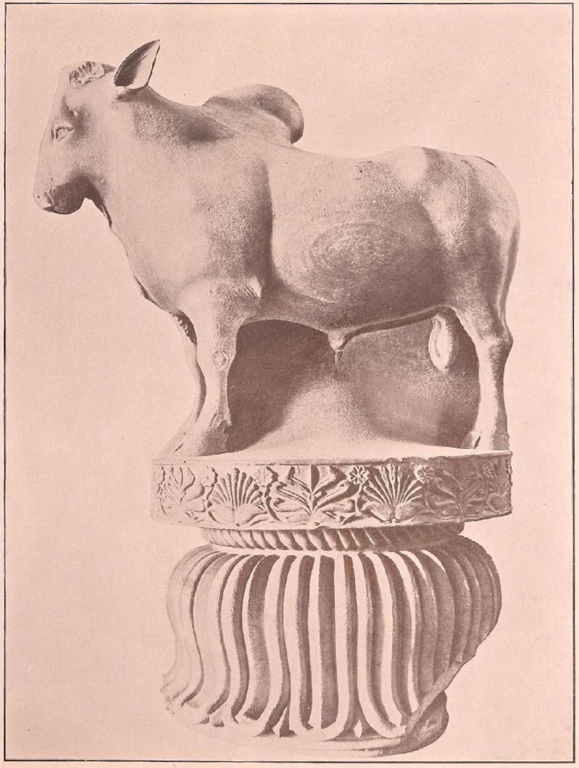


(*a*) Sarnath Capital.

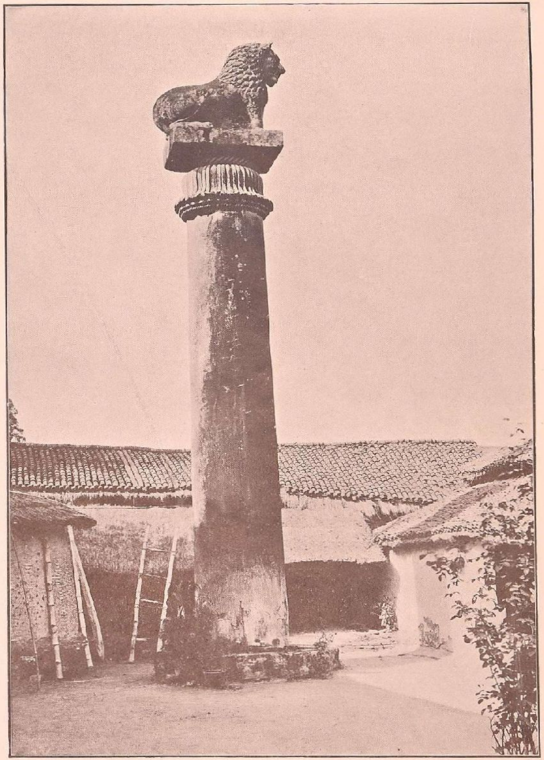
(*b*) Rampurva Lion Capital.

Plate II.

Photo.-engraved & printed at the Offices of the Survey of India, Calcutta, 1927.



(*a*) Rampurva Bull Capital.



(*b*) Besarh (Kolhua) pillar.

Plate III.

Photo.-engraved & printed at the Offices of the Survey of India, Calcutta, 1927.

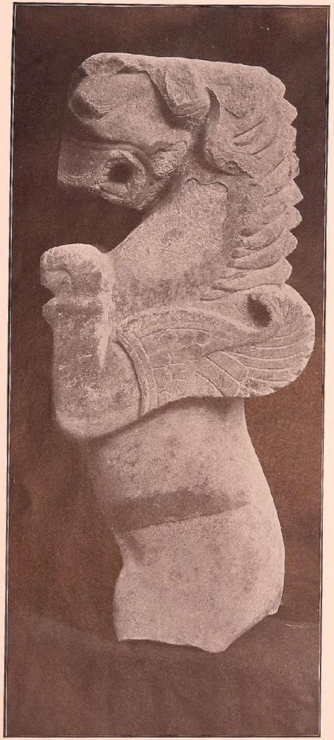
(*a* & *b*) Patna Statue, without head.

(*c* & *d*) Patna Statue, without legs.

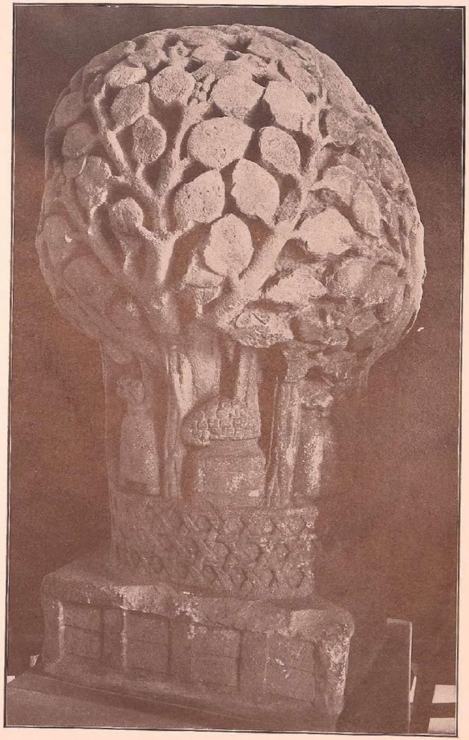
Plate IV.

Photo.-engraved & printed at the Offices of the Survey of India, Calcutta, 1927.

PLATE V.



(a & b) GRIFFIN FROM PATNA.



(c) KALPADRUMA.

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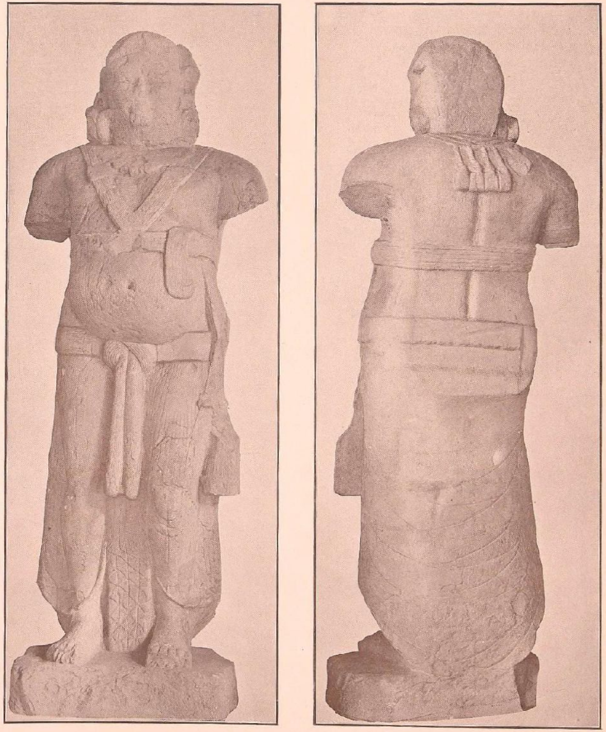
Plate VI.

(a & b) Besnagar female statue.



(c & d) Parkham Statue.

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THE BEGINNINGS OF ART IN EASTERN INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SCULPTURES IN THE INDIAN MUSEUM, CALCUTTA.

(*a* & *b*) MALE FIGURES ON THE RAIL PILLARS OF BHARHUT AND BODH-GAYA.

Photo.-engraved & printed at the Offices of the Survey of India, Calcutta, 1927.